Sponsoring Committee: Professor Irene Cypher,
Professor Hillier Krieghbaum
Professor Norma Thompson

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR MOTION PICTURES

An Investigation of the Policy and Practice of Film Classification

REV. JOHN M.artin PHELAN, S.J.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the School of Education of
New York University

1968

Thesis accepted
APR 10 1968

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Feb. 29, 1968

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Professor Hillier Krieghbaum
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An Abstract of

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Approved:-
Prof Irene F. Cypher

The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (NCOMP), formerly titled the National Legion of Decency, is considered the most effective pressure group on the American film industry. This dissertation examined the policy of NCOMP and compared that policy with its practical implementation in NCOMP's principal activity: the classification of feature films according to categories of moral acceptability. There are six categories: A-I signifies that a film is rated suitable for general patronage; A-II, for adults and adolescents; A-III, for adults only; A-IV, for adults with reservations; B films are objectionable in part for all and C films are condemned or considered entirely unsuitable for all.

An office of the American Catholic hierarchy under the supervision of the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, NCOMP is operationally autonomous under the direction of an Executive Secretary, a priest, and assisted by a board of consultors of priests and Catholic laity appointed by the Executive Secretary. At the time of this writing, the Executive Secretary is Rev. Patrick J. Sullivan, S.J. and the consultors are 84 in number, 29 priests, 46 laymen and laywomen, 6 religious brothers and 3 nuns. Twenty of the consultors are parents and 25 are teachers; all but 2 are college graduates.

All major film distributors in the U. S. offer private screenings of their films, before they are generally released, to NCOMP consultors. To avoid C or condemned ratings, film companies have cut objectionable scenes from their films before release, as they do for the Production

Code Administration, the self-regulation arm of the Motion Picture Association of America.

Established as a national office in 1936 by the American hierarchy, the Legion of Decency sprung from a nationwide campaign of interfaith cooperation against an alleged flood of sex exploitation films. Martin Quigley, Sr., editor of Motion Picture Herald, and Joseph I. Breen, the first Production Code Administrator, were instrumental in the forming of the campaign and the establishment of the Legion.

Research reveals that only one per cent of all films considered objectionable by NCOMP from October 1956 to October 1966 were so found because of their treatment of religion. Two out of three objectionable films were so judged because of their treatment of sex. Of all films reviewed, one out of five is found objectionable for some reason, (i.e., rated B or C).

A study of the opinions of the consultors and a detailed analysis of each consultor's written review of 48 sample films from October 1962 to October 1966 disclosed that they were not guided by any Catholic dogma in rating films, but rather by individual taste. In order of importance, the rating criteria used by consultors are: (1) Honesty and integrity of the film's theme; (2) artistic excellence; (3) treatment of sex with discreet restraint; (4) underlying philosophy of hope and trust in the fundamental goodness of man; (5) good taste. Unfortunately these criteria are not uniformly applied to every film rated. If a film does not contain objectionable scenes of sex or violence, it is passed with an A rating. If such scenes are present, then these criteria are applied to see if such scenes are artistically warranted or merely commercially inserted. Ironically, therefore, an A-IV film is usually of higher quality than an A-I film, which may be sentimental trash.

NCOMP ratings seem of doubtful value in guiding those who choose to use them as guidance. Short reviews, instead of ratings, are preferable.

There is nothing specifically Catholic in the policy or the practice of the National Catholic Film Office, which befits its interfaith origins more than its title.

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PREFACE

Since so much of the research for this dissertation depended on the cooperation of institutions and individuals more than on the availability of documents, I owe a large debt of gratitude to Fr. Patrick Sullivan, S.J., Executive Secretary of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, without whose generosity this dissertation would have been impossible, and to his staff, without whose active help it would have required far more time to complete; to Messrs. Geoffrey Shurlock and Jack Vizzard of the Production Code Administration, who showed me every courtesy and cooperation; to Mme. Yvonne de Hemptinne of the Office Catholique International du Cinema, who lavishly supplied me with the documents of that office; and to Mr. J. D. Nicola of Catholic Press Features, who shared his copious notes with me.

Edward A. Walsh, Patterson Professor of Journalism at Fordham University, was of great assistance in the conception of this dissertation, as he has been in so many of my endeavors. A very special debt of thanks is due Dr. Janice Gorn of New York University, my thesis seminar advisor, who went far beyond the call of duty in formulating the execution of the dissertation. Of course, the members of my committee, Dr. Irene Cypher, Dr. Norma Thompson, and Professor Hillier Kreighbaum, were of immeasurable value in their patience, industry, and encouragement during the long months of writing this work.

Finally, I wish to thank the consultors of the National Catholic

Office for Motion Pictures for cooperating in this study. Though they may not agree with the conclusions of this dissertation, I am sure they realize the respect I have for their opinions and convictions.

J.M.P.

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INTRODUCTION

Not too many years ago young America was educated by three vigorous institutions: the family, the school, and the church. For approximately the last twenty years the influence of a new institution, if it may be called that, has grown rapidly at the expense of family, school and church.[1] The new institution, or force, or environment, as Marshall McLuhan has termed it,[2] is the collective impact of the mass media, especially the non-print media of film, television, and radio. The average American high-school graduate has spent far more hours listening to radio than to teachers and has given far more time to gazing at TV and film screens than at textbooks and chalkboards. The film and TV, much of whose prime-time content is film, do far more than entertain. As Lippmann, Boorstin and Van den Haag have pointed out,[3] they inform, mislead, enlighten, trivialize, and offer stereotypes of the world around us and the world within us.

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[1] Newton N. Minow, "The Broadcasters Are Public Trustees," Contemporary Moral Issues, ed. Harry K. Girvetz (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), p. 188.

[2] Marshall McLuhan, "McLuhan on McLuhanism," Sunday Showcase, transcription of presentation, May 15, 1966 (New York: Channel 13/WNDT, 1966), p. 9.

[3] Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 61; Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), passim; Ernest Van den Haag, "Of Happiness and of Despair We Have No Measure," Mass Culture, ed. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 504-36.

Thus American producers, directors, and distributors of film have a great influence on America. But they themselves do not exist in a vacuum; they are influenced in turn. One of the influences on them which some might term of major importance is the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (NCOMP), formerly known as the National Legion of Decency. For Otto Preminger, this influence is unwarranted: "The Legion of Decency has assumed an undue position of power because of the cowardice of some major motion picture companies. They're scared of the Legion; scared of losing money; I don't know what in the hell they're scared of."[4] Preminger was referring to the NCOMP rating of films according to moral acceptability. An objectionable rating is believed to lead to early rigor mortis at the box office.

Deemed unwarranted, the influence of NCOMP might also seem unnecessary, since the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) has its own office of moral uplift, the Production Code Administration (PCA), which awards or withholds its Seal of Approval depending on a film's adherence to the Production Code, the moral guidelines of the industry. Supported by the industry it seeks to regulate, the PCA frequently finds its prescriptions more honoured in clever circumvention than observance. There have been times when the PCA appears to have been using NCOMP as a stick to enforce its own norms.

There was some dismay, therefore, when NCOMP gave an acceptable rating to Goldfinger before the PCA had decided on the film. Geoffrey Shurlock, chief administrator of PCA, admits to calling Msgr. Thomas F. Little, then executive secretary of NCOMP, and asking him: "What are you doing, corrupting your own people?"[5]

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[4] Judy Stone, "The Legion of Decency: What's Nude?" Ramparts, IV, No. 5 (September, 1965), p. 44.

A growing number of indignant Catholics might give a hearty affirmative answer to Shurlock's question. One letter, not untypical, sent to NCOMP states: ". . . /NCOMP/ should be at least reorganized to include only those who adhere to the standards of morality set by the Commandments of God and the Church."[6] NCOMP's rating of another James Bond film, Thunderball, as acceptable for adults, drew fire from Jim Greene, a columnist appearing in the conservative diocesan weekly of the Brooklyn (New York City) Diocese, The Tablet: "Now comes the wildest and sexiest James Bond movie yet and what does the National Office do . . . calls it A3. . . . No wonder they no longer call the office for movie classification The Legion of Decency."[7]

On the other hand, Ephraim London, the New York attorney who won the Miracle case, thinks that: ". . . the Church as represented by the Legion has reached the point where religious substance is no longer the essential issue; the essential issue is whether or not they are going to adhere to a rule that there is something morally dangerous and indecent in the human body."[8]

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[5] Ibid., p. 49.

[6] Letter from the files of NCOMP, anonymous, Feb. 23, 1966.

[7] Jim Greene, "Spotlight," The Tablet, Jan. 27, 1966.

[8] Stone, op. cit., p. 54.

Recently, however, the suggestive gyrations of the human body of Elizabeth Taylor, among other things, forced Geoffrey Shurlock to deny the PCA Seal to Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, although NCOMP gave the film an acceptable rating. The subsequent liberalization of the Code announced by MPAA president Jack Valenti is believed to have been triggered by this anomaly.

The fact that in this instance NCOMP was more liberal than the PCA is an irony of history. The Legion of Decency was founded with the explicit purpose of enforcing the Code because producers and distributors were ignoring it in the early 1930's.[9] The old Legion of Decency was a watchdog of morality and solely that. In recent years, however, NCOMP has taken an interest in the artistic value of films and has acted accordingly. Mr. Shurlock should not have been too dismayed at NCOMP's decision on Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? since he might have been prepared for it by NCOMP's granting of an award to Darling on Feb. 2, 1966 months before the Woolf? ruling in June of the same year. (Darling is a cold examination of la dolce vita, British-style, with not overly delicate treatment of fornication, adultery, and homosexuality.)

The very next day after the Darling award, the Broadcast and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches gave a similar award to The Pawnbroker, a film that NCOMP had condemned. Referring to the types of film that both church groups had honoured, Arthur Knight, film critic of the Saturday Review, stated:

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[9] Will H. Hays, The Memoirs of Will H. Hays (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), pp. 449-54.

> Obviously, in announcing their awards, the church groups were also heralding a new and quite conscious shift in their position *vis-a-vis* the movies. No longer, their awards indicated, were they interested merely in the sin in cinema, but in artistic merit and social value as well. And high time, too, I might add.[10]

Distributor Joseph Levine, who received the award for *Darling*, said of the awards in general: "This is the greatest thing that ever happened in motion pictures."[11] Somewhat less exuberant in his reaction was David S. Hudson, public information co-ordinator for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts:

> Although the clergy and its agencies are bound and entitled to hold definite opinions on many areas of the arts, to broadcast them as authoritative lacks validity. Only slightly less foolish would be [sic] to invite the national office of the teamsters' union to enlighten us about the artistic qualities of the current cinema.[12]

Whatever else one might say about the work of NCOMP, it can be safely maintained that the criteria by which it judges films are not clear to the general public nor to some of the special publics concerned. It has critics who condemn it as godless and critics who disdain it as puritanical. Yet NCOMP is conceded to be, by friend and foe, the most powerful single pressure group on the film industry.[13]

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[10] Arthur Knight, "Who's To Classify?" *Saturday Review*, Feb. 26, 1966, p. 42.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] Letter to *Saturday Review*, March 19, 1966.

[13] Thomas B. Leary and J. Roger Noall, "Entertainment: Public Pressure and the Law," *Harvard Law Review*, LXXI (1957), 359.

NCOMP has been mentioned in many articles and studies about the film industry and about pressure groups, but there have been no studies of the current NCOMP itself as an institution. There have been no studies of the policy of NCOMP over the years, nor attempts to trace the sources and uncover the principles behind that policy with any rigor.[14] More pertinently, there have been no studies of the practice of film classification pursued by NCOMP; yet film classification is the paramount activity of NCOMP.

This thesis has confined itself to a study of NCOMP's film classification. The stated policy of the office has been examined and compared with the actual practice of film classification, in order to discover the sources and principles formative of policy and operative in practice. The specific methods used for this investigation have been presented and evaluated in Chapter I, Delimitations and Methodology.

Only when it is known what NCOMP really is and what NCOMP really does, as well as what it proposes and professes to do and to be, may one make intelligent assessments of its relevance. This thesis reveals what NCOMP is and what it does in the belief that this knowledge will help others to understand the social and moral impact of a medium that has reached millions.

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[14] Cf. Chapter I, Related Studies.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Related Studies

Although the former Legion of Decency and the present National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures are tangentially treated in many studies of the film and the problem of freedom of expression and censorship,[1] there have only been four studies formally devoted to it. The first of these is an unpublished Master's thesis by Robert W. Janes for the University of Chicago in 1939. Janes' study was primarily on the effect of Legion condemnation on movie attendance in Chicago. He did this by comparing attendance figures in "high-Catholic districts" (i.e., districts whose Catholic population was above 23.6 per cent of the total population, the percentage for Chicago as a whole) with "low-Catholic districts" (i.e., below the 23.6 per cent average).[2] During the periods tested, April-May and September-October of 1934, he found that seven out of seventeen "low-Catholic" theatres and fourteen out of sixteen "high-Catholic" theatres exhibited fewer condemned films after the Legion began its work there.[3] Janes' thesis is a limited study of the effects of the Legion for a short period in sections of one city.

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[1] Cf. Bibliography.

[2] Robert W. Janes, "The Legion of Decency and the Motion Picture Industry" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1939), p. 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 73.

In 1945, Rev. Paul W. Facey, S.J., finished his doctoral dissertation about the Legion of Decency for the political philosophy department of Fordham University. Next to primary sources, Facey's work is the first reliable witness of the early development of the Legion, which he has traced from its original formation under the leadership of Martin Quigley, Sr.[4] Facey's descriptive analysis of the Legion's criteria for judging films is delimited to the study of 160 reports on six major films in the Legion's files from 1936 to 1938, the summary of the published reasons for classification of these six films,[5] and selected quotations from two sources that were required reading for Legion reviewers.[6]

The Production Code of the industry itself, of course, was the major directive document of the reviewers.[7] In all, Facey devoted 47 of the 206 pages of his dissertation to the question of Legion criteria for film classification. He did not treat of definitive Roman Catholic statements on the film and morality; this aspect was not his chief concern.[8]

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[4] Paul W. Facey, S.J., "The Legion of Decency: A Sociological Analysis of the Emergence and Development of a Social Pressure Group" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, New York, 1945).

[5] Ibid., pp. 92-112.

[6] How to Judge the Morality of Motion Pictures (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, n.d.); Richard Dana Skinner, The Morals of the Screen (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, n.d.).

[7] Ibid., pp. 77-81.

[8] Ibid., p. 1.

In 1957 the scholarly Theological Studies published a short monograph by the moral theologians Gerald Kelly and John Ford on the extent of the moral obligation Catholics had to follow the classifications of films in their own movie attendance.[9] Kelly and Ford relied entirely on Facey for information about the Legion and its activities.[10] Their contribution is a short and lucid analysis of excerpts from Papal and episcopal sources relevant to their purpose: to delimit the gravity of the moral obligation, if any, imposed by Legion classifications on Catholics. They devoted four pages to the explication of film classification.[11]

Ernest David Giglio, in his doctoral dissertation for the Social Science Department of Syracuse University, devoted one of his seven chapters to the Catholic influence on the film industry.[12] A little more than half of this chapter is devoted to Catholic pressure on four films, Baby Doll, The Moon is Blue, The Miracle, and And God Created Woman, from sources other than the Legion of Decency.[13]

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a recounting of the formation of the Legion drawn from Facey[14] and a descriptive report of the Legion's classification system. However, no study was made of individual ratings and the reasoning behind them, nor was Giglio concerned with the principles and sources of the criteria for these categories outside of audience effect.[15] He did offer a brief account of the liberalization of Legion policy since 1957.[16] This is the only scholarly recognition of the change in direction of recent NCOMP history.

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[9] Gerald Kelly, S.J., and John Ford, S.J., "The Legion of Decency," Theological Studies, XVIII (September, 1957), 387-433.

[10] Ibid., p. 387, n. 1.

[11] Ibid., pp. 396-400.

[12] Ernest David Giglio, "The Decade of The Miracle, 1952-1962: A Study in the Censorship of the American Motion Picture" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, Syracuse, 1964), pp. 186-238.

[13] Ibid., pp. 198-225.

A study indirectly related to this dissertation is Ruth Inglis' study for the Commission on the Freedom of the Press, Freedom of the Movies.[17] Primarily historical, the work does not go into Legion activity in any detail, but it does offer extensive information on the effect pressure groups had on motion picture companies.

The study most illuminative of the structure of the proposed dissertation is ironically not concerned with the former Legion nor the present NCOMP. It is Ira Carmen's doctoral dissertation for the Political Science Department of the University of Michigan in 1964.

Carmen made an exhaustive historical analysis of Supreme Court decisions on censorship as pertinent to films[18] and then did a field study of censorship practices of the federal government, of the states of New York, Maryland, Virginia, Kansas, and of the cities of Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, and Atlanta.[19] Carmen studied the laws of each jurisdiction and interviewed a sample of the censors to find out their criteria.[20] He could not, because of the breadth of the study, offer an exhaustive report of individual films censored. Carmen's conclusion was that local and state censorship of films is violative of Supreme Court policy for due process and restriction of prior restraint.[21]

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[14] Ibid., p. 191, n. 6.

[15] Ibid., p. 186.

[16] Ibid., p. 225-32.

[17] Ruth Inglis, Freedom of the Movies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

[18] Ira Carmen, "State and Local Motion Picture Censorship and Constitutional Liberties with Special Emphasis on the Communal Acceptance of Supreme Court Decision-Making" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1964), pp. 12-141.

This study is similar to Carmen's thesis in its outline: A study of the policy of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to film, a study of the policy of NCOMP as an arm of that Church, and an examination of the actual practice of NCOMP in classifying films.

Specifically, this study has been confined to NCOMP's primary activity, film classification, and asks the question: Is NCOMP policy consistent with NCOMP practice? The following pages discuss the methods used to discover and evaluate both NCOMP policy and practice.

Definitions

Specialized definitions are avoided due to the inter-disciplinary nature of this study. As used in this study, the following definitions are given:

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[19] _Ibid_., pp. 182-333.

[20] _Ibid_., pp. 379-441.

[21] _Ibid_., pp. 355 ff.

Criterion - "A standard of judging; a rule or test by which anything is tried in forming a correct judgment respecting it."[22]

Film - "A motion picture."[23] Here, a motion picture, with sound reproduction, depicting fictional or historical drama.

Moral - "Conforming to a standard of what is good and right."[24]

Policy - "A settled course of action adopted and followed by a government, institution, body, or individual."[25] Here, the settled course of action NCOMP management claims to have adopted and followed.

Practice - "Actual performance or application of knowledge; distinguished from theory, profession, etc."[26] Here, the concrete classification of specific films by NCOMP.

Principle(s) - "A fundamental truth; a primary or basic law, doctrine, or the like."[27] Here, the fundamental truths, laws, and doctrines involved in NCOMP policy and practice.

Source(s) - "The origin; the first or ultimate cause."[28] Here, documents, institutions, and persons influencing the policy and practice of NCOMP.

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[22] Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (second ed.; Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1960), p. 197.

[23] Ibid., p. 310.

[24] Ibid., p. 548.

[25] Ibid., p. 653.

[26] Ibid., p. 662.

[27] Ibid., p. 671.

[28] Ibid., p. 809.

Film Classification - The NCOMP practice of assigning the following graded ratings to films:

A-I = Morally unobjectionable for General Patronage.
A-II = Morally unobjectionable for Adults and Adolescents.
A-III = Morally unobjectionable for Adults.
A-IV = Morally unobjectionable for Adults with reservations.
B = Morally objectionable in part, for all.
C = Condemned.[29]

Delimitations and Methodology

A study of this kind is only scientific insofar as it strives to present what really has happened in an impartial and objective manner.[30] It is more the science of the detective than of the physicist since the former verifies not only by attention to detail but also relies on "common-sense reasoning, on a developed 'feel' for history and chronology, on familiarity with human behaviour, and on ever enlarging stores of information."[31]

The purpose of this study is to present the goals and ideals of the policy of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures as they relate to the methods and norms of its primary activity, film classification.

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[29] National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (NCOMP), 453 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y., n.d. (Mimeographed.)

[30] Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, The Modern Researcher (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), pp. 148-53.

[31] Ibid., p. 91.

Accordingly, the examination of the history, structure, and operations of NCOMP has not gone beyond what is useful for this purpose. Only so much of Catholic morality (or any other morality) has been discussed as is pertinent to NCOMP policy. No attempt has been made to explain Catholic moral teaching in general.

The question of the relationship between NCOMP policy and American conventions of morality has inevitably arisen in the course of this dissertation. National conventions of morality and cultural taboos, however, are too broad in meaning and impatient of definition to have been a formal part of the researched material for this dissertation.

Subordinate activities of NCOMP were not entirely ignored, but formal examination of them was virtually excluded.[32] Presented in the form of an expository essay, the dissertation is historical and descriptive and has employed philosophical-theological categories as appropriate frames of reference. Although tables and a questionnaire have been used as supportive data, no inferential statistics have been required since virtually the total population has been included in the study.[33]

The organization of the dissertation is straightforward and simple. Chapters II through V have attempted to answer four questions, respectively: What is NCOMP? What is the policy of NCOMP? How does

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[32] The National Center for Film Study, the educational affiliate of NCOMP, is reported briefly in Appendix B.

[33] Quinn McNemar, Psychological Statistics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 2.

NCOMP classify films? Is the policy of NCOMP consistent with its norms and methods of film classification?

Chapter II begins by placing the study in historical perspective with a brief narration of the origins and early policy formation of the Legion of Decency, which became the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures on December 8, 1965. The early formation of the Legion has been well documented by Facey and he has traced its operations up to 1945.[34] Giglio has retailed Facey's material and has added new material, in highly compressed form, that covers the period from 1945 to 1963.[35] This dissertation has made use of both Facey's and Giglio's work, but has also used primary sources from the files of NCOMP and the annual reports of NCOMP to the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures. The latter source has not been available to research since 1945. Chapter II concludes with a description of the present structure and operations of NCOMP derived at first hand from the files and personal interviews with the officers of NCOMP.

Chapter III is an examination of NCOMP policy as it has been formulated since 1957. In order to orient the examination in a meaningful context, the chapter begins with an exposition of fundamental moral concepts that have guided NCOMP policy since the formation of the Legion of Decency, relating them to moral theologians' opinions about the moral obligation of Catholics to observe NCOMP classifications in their film attendance.

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[34] Cf. Related Studies, at the beginning of this chapter.

[35] Ibid.

There is a generous measure of confusion in the popular mind about the policy of NCOMP. This is due in part to the perennial public misunderstanding that afflicts the Roman Catholic Church in the United States: to wit, that any statement made by any member of the hierarchy reflects a putative monolithic stance of the Church as a whole. Thus, individual statements about particular films from different chanceries in the United States have been associated with the Church at large and with NCOMP in particular.[36]

Accordingly, care has been taken to examine only those statements which are officially connected with NCOMP or the Episcopal Commission for Motion Pictures, its governing board. In this chapter, policy statements have been accepted at face value. The actual implementation of policy with regard to film classification has been examined in Chapter IV.

After NCOMP policy had been exposited, the documentary sources cited by NCOMP policy statements were examined. These sources are principally three papal documents: Vigilanti Cura (1936) by Pius XI, The Ideal Film (1955) and Miranda Prorsus (1957) by Pius XII.[37] Pertinent documents of the Second Vatican Council and the international federation of national Catholic film offices, the Office Catholique International du Cinema (OCIC), were also examined.

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[36] Giglio, op. cit., pp. 232-33.

[37] Pope Pius XI, Vigilanti Cura: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1936); Pope Pius XII, The Ideal Film (New York: National Legion of Decency, 1955); Pope Pius XII, Miranda Prorsus: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1957).

Finally, a summary of principles of NCOMP policy has been compiled from the research of this chapter. It is presented in schematic form.

The actual practice of film classification by NCOMP has been studied in Chapter V. The meaning of the different classification categories has been examined beyond the brief published explanation[38] through a study of NCOMP files that deal with the decisions to form some of these categories. This chapter has investigated not only the actual classifications made by individual NCOMP reviewers of forty-eight sample films, but has also examined the background and qualifications of these reviewers. The education and occupation of each NCOMP reviewer is on file at the office. The specific information required for this study has been obtained by means of a questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was therefore exploratory and it was designed deliberately without any previous hypothesis about the qualifications of the respondents.[39] On the other hand, the questionnaire design was determined by the objectives of the research in this part: to determine the operative principles governing moral criteria for the classification of films.[40]

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[38] Explanation of Film Classification (New York: National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, n.d.), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)

[39] Daniel Katz, "Field Studies," Research Methods in the Behavioural Sciences, eds. L. Festinger and D. Katz (New York: The Dryden Press, 1953), pp. 74-75.

[40] Charles F. Cannell and Robert L. Kahn, "Dual Purpose of the Questionnaire," Public Opinion and Propaganda, eds. Daniel Katz, Dorwin Cartwright, Samuel Eldersveld, and Alfred McClung Lee (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), p. 665.

Mindful of the inadequacies of survey questioning,[41] the researcher has framed the questions in such a way as to avoid the impression of critical testing of the respondents' knowledge; e.g., the respondent was asked to name books he has found most helpful, documents he has found most important, and directors he respects most, rather than grilled about his awareness of any specific books, documents, or directors. To obviate the danger of the questionnaire being dismissed due to lack of respect for its source, the researcher has been graciously accorded the sponsorship of the senior officer of NCOMP, over whose signature the questionnaire was sent. A covering letter[42] explained the purpose of the questionnaire, as an instrument for improving the work of NCOMP--a statement the researcher believes to be truthful as well as useful for his purposes. The regrettable reductionism that quantitative measures of qualitative parameters force upon the data of large population surveys was happily avoided in this case, where the total population was less than one hundred.[43]

Since the questionnaire was in essay form, the analysis of the answers was qualitative and the method was impressionistic. However, this did not invalidate, much less prevent, quantitative summaries of the findings according to dominant themes.[44] The coding unit used for these summaries was identical with each answer of each respondent to each question. Seventy-five per cent of all the questionnaires were returned (63 returns from 84 questionnaires).

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[41] Roy E. Carter, Jr., "Field Methods in Communication Research," Introduction to Mass Communication Research, eds. Ralph O. Nafziger and David M. White (2d ed. rev.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), pp. 101-21.

[42] A copy of the letter and questionnaire is in Appendix C.

[43] Dwight MacDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," Mass Culture, eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 70. Cf. also McNemar, loc. cit.

The questions were designed to provide the researcher with knowledge of the respondents' degree of informativeness about the film world (questions 1, 2, 3), his taste in films (questions 4, 5), his negative and positive attitudes toward the film (questions 7, 8, 10, 11), his knowledge of the Church's statements on the film (question 9), his personal criteria for classifying films (question 12), and his knowledge of and attitude toward NCOMP itself (questions 6, 13, 14).

The questions asked were:

1. The film critics whose judgments I most respect are:
2. The most helpful books I've read on film are:
3. The film director(s) whose work I respect most are:
4. Generally speaking, the best two movies I have seen in the last four years are:
5. Generally speaking, the two poorest movies I have seen in the last four years are:
6. I believe that my ratings receive consideration from the NCOMP officials in making their decision - yes or no?
7. The most frequent moral offense of movies is:
8. The most serious moral offense of movies is (Give reasons):

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[44] Alexander L. George, Propaganda Analysis: A Study of Inferences Made from Nazi Propaganda in World War II (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Co., 1959), pp. 96-99.

9. The most important Church statement, in my opinion, on the film is (Give title or idea):

10. Films can accomplish the following moral goods:

11. As a matter of fact, films have achieved the following moral goods:

12. Generally speaking, the following are the criteria or norms I use in judging a film for classification (The questions I ask myself about the film):

13. I approve/disapprove of the current NCOMP classification system because:

14. My experience with the Catholic Film Newsletter and any other works of the National Center for Film Study in Chicago has given me the following opinion of its value.

To strengthen the findings of the questionnaire, the researcher also interviewed five respondents of the total population who, in his opinion, represented the spectrum of response to question 12.[45]

Interpretation of the questionnaire responses has been presented in the text in the form of a commentary on tabular display of responses to each question. Categories used for sorting responses to essay questions were constructed after the responses had been studied to avoid *a priori* imposition of pre-determined categories.[46]

The practice of NCOMP classification that has been examined in detail was restricted to the study of forty-eight sample films, drawn from the total number of films classified from October 1, 1962 to October 1,

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[45] Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "The Art of Asking Why," *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, eds. Daniel Katz, Dorwin Cartwright, Samuel Eldersveld, and Alfred McClung Lee (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), p. 683.

[46] *Ibid*.

1966. No films have been sampled from those classified prior to this period because reliable records of individual ballots on these films are not extant. Films in the A-I, A-II, and A-III categories were excluded from the sample because NCOMP does not give reasons for classifying films in these acceptable categories. Twelve films have been selected from each annual period: seven in the B category, three in the A-IV category, and two in the C category.

The proportion of the numbers of sample films in each category, 7:3:2, is not symmetrical with the proportion of numbers of all films placed in these categories for the same time period: 17.6:5:6. The reason for this disproportion is that the sample was chosen not to represent a quantitative measure of the number of films placed in these categories, but rather to serve as an extended qualitative example of the reasoning and criteria used by NCOMP reviewers in classifying films. For this reason the A-IV category is over-represented because this borderline category provides the broadest spectrum of opinion among reviewers. For the same reason the number of films chosen, 48, cannot pretend to have statistical validity based on any mathematical model. The sample films are valid as case studies of the application of NCOMP criteria of film classification. The number of films chosen was a result of reasonable choice on the part of the researcher to give his interpretation a sufficiently broad base yet within necessarily manageable proportions.

The total number of films in the sampled categories from October, 1962, to October, 1966, represents the following percentages of all films rated in all categories for the same time period: A-IV - 4.22 per cent, B - 14.89 per cent, C - 5.05 per cent.[47]

The published reasons for the classification of all B and C films from 1957 to 1966 have also been examined and the findings have been presented in tabular form.[48] Since the total universe of films in these categories is represented and the coding unit (each published rating is in the form of a short paragraph) is predetermined and uniform, these data are only deficient by reason of the necessarily impressionistic choice of symbols.[49] These data are especially relevant to the final chapter which has compared the policy and practice of NCOMP from 1957 to 1966 in summary form.

The ballots for the sample films have been displayed in summary form in Chapter IV. The underlying criteria used by NCOMP reviewers in classifying films from the example of their judgments on the sample films have been exposited at the close of the chapter.

Chapter V, the final chapter, offers a synthesis of predominant principles and chief sources formative of official policy and expressive of actual NCOMP practice.

This dissertation has combined three forms: historical, descriptive, and philosophical-theological. These three forms have intermingled throughout all the parts of the thesis although some forms have been more dominant in individual sections. The dissertation has not been a quantitative analysis of NCOMP's activities and policy statements, but rather a qualitative assessment of ultimately unmeasurable entities. Source documents can be traced and identified, but the extent of their influence is a matter of judgment, not measurement. The sample films chosen represent by example the kind of films that were judged problematical by NCOMP over a period of four years. They cannot claim to be a perfect microcosm of all the films ever objected to or questioned by NCOMP, since no one can claim that art can be placed under a normal curve.[50]

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[47] Cf. Table XX, Appendix A.

[48] Cf. Tables XVI through XIX, Chapter V.

[49] George, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

The only data generated by the research, to wit, the answers to the questionnaire and the interview statements, have been of the same order as the other data. They were assessed historically, descriptively, and within a philosophical and theological framework.[51] No attempt has been made to measure them by any mathematical model, except to indicate percentages of response or classifications within given categories.

The end result has been a detailed account of one attempt to inject certain ethical ideals and conventional norms into that curious mixture of art, show business, and big business, called the motion picture industry. The type of research employed here can help others in determining whether this attempt, called NCOMP, is effective and desirable or abortive and destructive.

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[50] Carl I. Hovland, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, Fred D. Sheffield, Experiments on Mass Communications (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 5.

[51] Barzun and Graff, op. cit., pp. 157-66.

CHAPTER II

THE FORMATION OF THE LEGION OF DECENCY AND THE PRESENT STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS OF NCOMP

The structure and operations of NCOMP, its organization, affiliations, and functions, can only be fully understood in the light of the historical origins of the Legion of Decency. It is best to begin with a brief narration of the events that led to the formation of the Legion of Decency, a summation of the documents that directed and formed its policies, and a recounting of the key decisions that shaped the implementation of these policies.

Origins of the Legion of Decency

On the night of October 1, 1933, when the nation was in the middle of a long economic depression with thousands of jobless and hungry Americans looking for help, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City was jammed with Catholics rallying to support Catholic Charities' drive to aid the needy. Al Smith, the Horatio Alger of the lower class Catholics despite his failure to defeat Herbert Hoover in the 1928 presidential election, Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, and the Apostolic Delegate of the Pope, Amletto Cardinal Cicognani were the honored guests of the rally.[1] Cicognani gave a long address to the assemblage on the need for generosity to the charitable programs run by Catholic Charities. At the end of this address, however, he changed the topic to speak of the corrupting influence of immoral films on the ethical standards of the entire nation, now weakened by the depression. He called for a united front against this evil and invoked august authority for its sponsorship:

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[1] The New York Times, October 2, 1933, p. 1.

> Catholics are called by God, the Pope, the Bishops and the priests to a united and vigorous campaign for the purification of the cinema, which has become a deadly menace to morals.[2]

These words, from this speaker, and at this event, might prompt the belief that the Legion of Decency, which was to be formed soon after Cicognani's speech, was a Roman invention sprung fully born from the head of the Pope. Quite the contrary is true. The genesis of the Legion of Decency was American and ecumenical, in a time when the latter word was little used outside of theology textbooks.

American fears of the possible corrupting effects of films were expressed and institutionalized as early as 1907 when Chicago passed a censorship law aimed at the naughty nickelodeon.[3] By 1929 more than 48 bills had been introduced in state legislatures to control and censor film exhibition and distribution.[4] Hollywood had been viewed as the Babylon of America since 1921, the year of the Arbuckle case and the murder of Desmond Taylor.[5] In 1922 Will Hays, former Postmaster General, had been engaged by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) to clear the name and clean the image of the film industry. One of the industry's chief problems was the financial loss incurred by the curtailment of exhibition rights to films by the many censorship boards throughout the nation. These boards did not follow any uniform code and it was difficult to predict what films would be withheld from exhibition in different jurisdictions. In 1919, for example, the Pennsylvania State Board of Censors had condemned 16 films already approved by the National Board of Review.[6] To surmount this problem Hays had a list, as comprehensive as his staff could make it, of material found objectionable by censorship boards throughout the country. The list was labeled "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" and was distributed to the production companies.[7] The 11 "Don'ts" were strictly forbidden material: licentious nudity, drug traffic, white slavery, profane language, wilful offense to any nation, race, or creed, ridicule of the clergy, scenes of childbirth or children's genitalia, sex hygiene, miscegenation, and sex perversion. The 24 "Be Carefuls" included the use of the American flag, methods of perpetrating crimes, and legal executions. The list was based on precedent, not principle, and offered no certain immunity from censorship difficulties. A uniform code was desirable, but government intervention was feared.

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[2] _Ibid_., p. 5.

[3] _Chicago Municipal Code_ (1939, as amended), Sect. 155-4.

[4] Morris Ernst and Pare Lorentz, _Censored: The Private Life of the Movie_ (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930), p. 170.

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[5] Giglio, op. cit., pp. 29-41.

[6] Inglis, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

[7] Will H. Hays, Memoirs (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1955), pp. 432-44.

In 1929 a member of the Chicago Motion Picture Censorship Commission, Fr. FitzGeorge Dinneen, S.J., was advised by Martin Quigley, Sr., the publisher of the Motion Picture Herald, that a uniform code for film production would obviate the need for so many censorship boards to control distribution and exhibition of films.[8] Working at the source, this code would be far more effective. Quigley submitted that he was capable of drawing up such a code and Fr. Dinneen called in Fr. Daniel A. Lord, S.J., who had recently served as one of the technical advisors for King of Kings, to assist Quigley.[9]

Quigley presented the finished code to Hays, who gladly accepted it. After revising the code by inserting some of the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls," Hays submitted it to the board of directors of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). On March 31, 1930 the MPPDA adopted Quigley's code, which from then on became known as the Production Code.[10] The Production Code was to last for thirty-five years.

Dinneen, Lord, and Quigley realized that this formal adoption of their document would be merely an empty gesture unless compliance to its regulations could be enforced. The MPPDA had enlisted no enforcement procedures in adopting the Production Code. Fr. Wilfred Parsons, S.J., editor of the Jesuit weekly, America, wrote: "What about enforcement? . . . No form of outside force except that of public opinion is feasible or desirable, and no form of censorship except self-censorship will work in practice."[11]

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[8] Paul W. Facey, S.J., op. cit., p. 39.

[9] Ibid., p. 40.

[10] Ibid., pp. 40-41.

Despite the very real fear of censorship, Hollywood nevertheless continued to produce films whose sensationalism was designed more to raise box office receipts than to please the censors or the framers of the Production Code: gangster films like Scarface and Mae West comedies.[12] Giglio has pointed out that Henry James Forman's Payne Fund Study, Our Movie Made Children, published in 1933, encouraged the critics of screen morality by indicating that one third of the weekly film attendance was provided by those under 21 and that one third of this group was under 13.[13] According to Forman, only one film produced in 1930 had been designed for children.[14]

Quigley was determined that the Production Code capture public endorsement in order that it might become the enforced norm for the industry. He engaged the services of Joseph I. Breen, a personal friend who was the public relations man for the Peabody Coal Company and had served in 1925 as the public relations director for the Catholic Eucharistic Congress in Chicago.[15] Through Breen, Quigley enlisted the support of Fr. Wilfred Parsons, S.J., who used the editorial pages of America to promote the Code. Parsons induced Cardinal Hayes of New York to endorse the Code and Dinneen won a similar endorsement from Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago.[16] Hays appointed Breen as his assistant in 1931. Now based in Hollywood, Breen contacted Bishop John J. Cantwell of Los Angeles in January, 1932. Bishop Cantwell declined to issue a public statement supporting the Code, but privately endorsed the plan of a public crusade.[17]

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[11] Wilfred Parsons, S.J., "Editorial," America, April 19, 1930, p. 33.

[12] Giglio, op. cit., p. 42.

[13] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

[14] Henry James Forman, Our Movie Made Children (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 31.

Despite these promotional efforts, Quigley, Breen, and Parsons still felt that the Code was merely an empty gesture on the part of the MPPDA, and that the public was not sufficiently aware of the need for the Code.[18] In September of 1933 they met in Washington, D. C., with the Rector of the Catholic University, Msgr. Joseph M. Corrigan, to seek his advice. Corrigan suggested that they contact the Pope's Apostolic Delegate, Cardinal Cicognani, who resided in Washington. The first day of the next month, Cicognani delivered his address at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

The next month, back in Washington, the American bishops held their annual November meeting. At this meeting, Bishop Cantwell proposed that the bishops form a committee to pursue the goals of Quigley, Lord, Parsons, and Dinneen. Thus, the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, chaired by Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati, was established.[19]

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[15] Facey, op. cit., p. 41.

[16] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

[17] Ibid., p. 45.

[18] Ibid., p. 44.

Since each bishop is sovereign in his own diocese, the implementation of a campaign against immoral films varied in the then 104 American dioceses in direct proportion to the resident bishop's enthusiasm for the enterprize.[20] The uniform feature of the campaign was the circulation of a pledge to join the Legion of Decency against immoral movies. Some bishops merely circulated the pledge; others had it preached from the pulpit; and still others backed demonstrations against certain specific films. The pledge was distributed in April, 1934:

> I wish to join the Legion of Decency which condemns vile and unwholesome moving pictures. I unite with all those who protest against them as a grave menace to youth, to home life, to country and to religion.
>
> I condemn absolutely those salacious motion pictures which, with other degrading agencies, are corrupting public morals and promoting a sex mania in our land.
>
> I shall do all I can to arouse public opinion against the portrayal of vice as a normal condition of affairs, and against depicting criminals of any class as heroes and heroines, presenting their filthy philosophy of life as something acceptable to decent men and women.
>
> I unite with all those who condemn the display of suggestive advertisements on bill-boards, at theatre entrances and the favorable notices given to immoral motion pictures.

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[19] *Ibid*., p. 45.

[20] *Ibid*., p. 50.

> Considering these evils, I hereby promise to remain away from all motion pictures except those which do not offend decency and Christian morality. I promise further to secure as many members as possible for the Legion of Decency.
>
> I make this protest in a spirit of self-respect and with the conviction that the American public does not demand filthy pictures, but clean entertainment and educational features.[21]

The author of this classic specimen of righteous indignation is unknown and the pledge was changed to milder tones in 1945 and again in 1960.[22] In any event, this pledge won the support of more than seven million Catholics.[23]

Support for the campaign was not restricted to Catholics. The New York Times endorsed the campaign.[24] The Protestant Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, with a membership in excess of 20 million, voted an endorsement of the campaign and adopted a modified version of the pledge.[25] The United Presbyterian Assembly, The Massachusetts Civic League, the Christian Endeavour Union, the Oregon Methodist Conference, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews, all joined in the campaign. Altogether, 54 Protestant and Jewish organizations cooperated with the Legion.[26] The Christian Century, an interdenominational Protestant weekly, declared: "Thank God that the Catholics are at last opening up on this foul thing [immoral films] as it deserves! What can we [Protestants] do to help?"[27]

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[21] Facey, op. cit., p. 144.

[22] The text of all three pledges is quoted in full on pp. 73-75, infra.

[23] Facey, op. cit., p. 58.

[24] The New York Times, July 13, 1934.

[25] Giglio, op. cit., p. 45.

[26] Inglis, op. cit., p. 124.

Inglis admits that there can be no accurate figures on the number of Americans who participated in the campaign. Yet Inglis also maintains that there is no doubt that the campaign was the reason for the creation of the Production Code Administration. In the spring of 1934, Paramount Pictures was near bankruptcy, RKO and Universal had gone into receivership, and movie stocks were low. The boycott under Legion auspices came at a critical time, and was thus effective.[28]

In July of 1934, the MPPDA capitulated and created the Production Code Administration to enforce the Code and placed none other than Joseph I. Breen in the chair of administrator. From now on each film produced by members of MPPDA had to be submitted to the Production Code Administration for review. If they did not find moral fault with the film it was accorded a Code Seal of Approval. Films denied the Seal were denied distribution rights by members of MPPDA. If any member of the MPPDA went ahead and distributed an non-approved film, he was to be fined $25,000. Appeals to reverse denial of the Code Seal had to be taken directly to the Board of Directors of MPPDA.[29]

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[27] The Christian Century, June 20, 1934, p. 822.

[28] Inglis, op. cit., p. 121.

[29] Ibid., pp. 124-25.

Written by a Catholic layman and a Jesuit priest and promoted by the hierarchy and laity of the Catholic Church with the active backing of varied religious and fraternal groups, the Code was to be administered by a Catholic, Joseph I. Breen, until 1954.

The Legion had won its "Holy War," but how could it insure continued adherence to the Code without continued pressure? A campaign of the proportions and intensity of the few months before the creation of the PCA could never be permanent. Secondly, the pledge said nothing about the Code as such. Thirdly, there was no one agreed standard of applying criticism to films outside of the PCA itself. It was the old question of who censors the censors. What was needed was a permanent review board to check up on the PCA and a means of applying pressure on the industry to conform to the Code. The best means was economic, as the Legion boycott had proven by its results.

The Chairman of the Episcopal Committee, Archbishop McNicholas stated:

> Even if the Legion accomplish its purpose of purifying the screen, it would seem to have the further permanent purpose of keeping the people informed, thereby maintaining a healthy public opinion which may prove to the producers the wisdom of not returning to their old ways of capitalizing on the sins and weaknesses of men.[30]

At their annual November meeting, 1934, in Washington, D. C., all the bishops issued a general statement that read in part: "The Legion of Decency will be maintained as a permanent protest against everything in the moving pictures which is subversive of morality."[31]

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[30] "The Episcopal Committee and the Problem of Evil Motion Pictures," Ecclesiastical Review, XCI (1934), 118.

Avery Dulles, S.J., quotes Will Hays on the consuming zeal of the Legion campaign: ". . . in some cases the clergy [were] obliged to restrain their people from boycotting even decent shows and condemning all movies."[32] If the Legion were to be permanent, there must be some way of informing all of what was considered decent or not. The only Catholic group that had been reviewing films for any length of time was the Motion Picture Department of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae (IFCA), Catholic women who had graduated from Catholic colleges and universities. Under the "open-door" policy of the Hays Office, they had been reviewing films since 1924.[33] The IFCA had not condemned films, but rather issued a "white list" of recommended films, choosing to ignore films they did not approve. To be sure, other groups had published "black lists" of condemned films on an intermittent basis throughout the country. Father Lord's sodality magazine, The Queen's Work, published a list of five films each month that "notably violate the Code."[34] Father Dinneen in Chicago locally published a complete list of film classifications to inform civic and Church groups of what to boycott.

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[31] Report of the Episcopal Committee on Motion Pictures (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1935), p. 378. (Mimeographed.)

[32] Avery Dulles, S.J., The Legion of Decency (New York: The America Press Pamphlets, 1956), p. 6.

[33] Facey, op. cit., p. 66.

[34] Ibid., p. 65.

Fr. Lord switched to this list for his own magazine.[35] Many Catholic papers throughout the nation published the Chicago list as did others publish the IFCA "white list." In November of 1934, the bishops had given a blessing to the Chicago list as acceptable, but unofficial.[36] The IFCA began to classify objectionable films, and ceased to give aesthetic appreciations of endorsed films. The New York Archdiocesan Legion used the IFCA listings, which were published in the Catholic paper, starting in January of 1935. By the end of that year, the Chicago list was no longer published, and the New York IFCA list became the only general list published nationally on an irregular, but usually weekly, basis.[37] The list rated films as A1 - Suitable for General Patronage, A2 - Suitable for Adults, B - Objectionable in Part for All, and C - Condemned.[38]

On February 1, 1936, The National Legion of Decency, as a single office, operating on a national level, was born. The Executive Secretary, who would run the office and be responsible for everyday activity, was Fr. John J. McClafferty, from the Archdiocese of New York, but responsible directly to the Episcopal Committee headed by Archbishop McNicholas of

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[35] Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p. 67.

[38] Report on the National Legion of Decency, November, 1937 (New York: NCOMP, 1937), p. 8. Annual reports of the Legion and NCOMP are not published. Since 1950, inclusive, the reports have been printed, not typewritten. Hereinafter, each report will be referred to as: Report 19.

Cincinnati.[39]

A reading of the annual reports of the Legion makes it clear that the Executive Secretary ran the operation entirely, even to the point of policy. At the end of each year, suggestions were submitted to the Episcopal Committee for changes in policy of a minor nature and they were usually acceded to. Major changes in policy have been rare. These will be studied infra in the examination of Legion and NCOMP policy.

From February of 1936 to November of 1937, the IFCA reviewed 1,271 films for the Legion. Of these films, they judged 780 to be suitable for all, 360 suitable only for adults, 98 objectionable in part for all. They condemned 13 films.[40]

The IFCA reviewers were drawn from a pool of 98.[41] According to Facey, an average of twenty women attended each screening, which was accorded the IFCA by the distributing companies before general release of the film in question, in order to secure published ratings before the film reached the public. The IFCA women wrote their ratings of films privately along with the reasons they had for giving the rating. At the end of each week, the IFCA reviewers met together and agreed on a common rating for each film of the past week. These ratings and reasons were sent to Fr. McClafferty, who generally concurred with them and approved of their publication in the Catholic press as the ratings of the Legion of Decency. Any film rated C or B Msgr. McClafferty reviewed himself and at times revised the rating to a more acceptable category.[42]

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[39] Facey, op. cit., p. 66.

[40] Cf. Table XX, Appendix A.

[41] Facey, op. cit., p. 67.

After the first few months of 1936 had passed, Fr. McClafferty feared that since all the reviewers were women, the ratings would be slanted from an exclusively feminine viewpoint. The volume of films he personally had to see was also becoming unmanageable. To remedy these problems, he formed a board of male consultors who were to review unfavorably rated films and possibly revise the original rating before publication. The board consisted of eight priests and 11 laymen, among them two doctors, two lawyers, and one judge.[43]

The ratings of films was out of the hands of the Episcopal Committee and run entirely by Fr. McClafferty.

The hierarchy was essential, however, in maintaining the continued pressure of the Legion on the Production Code Administration. The force that held the Legion movement together throughout the country was the pledge that so many Catholics and not a few non-Catholics had taken between April and July of 1934. To keep this force active, the Legion office requested the Episcopal Committee to urge the American bishops to appoint the Sunday nearest the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (December 8) of each year as Pledge Sunday. The Committee acceded to this request and in every diocese where the bishop cooperated, Catholics renewed the pledge at Mass each year on Pledge Sunday.[44] This practice has continued to this day, although the pledge is now mild and not militant, and generally it is made clear that no special obligation is involved.[45]

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[42] *Ibid*., pp. 67 ff.

[43] *Report, 1937*, p. 3.

From February to October of 1936, the first year of its operation, the Legion issued "special estimates" on certain films in addition to the ratings. These estimates amounted to aesthetic appreciations of the artistic and entertainment values of selected films. Archbishop McNicholas wrote Fr. McClafferty on November 11, 1936 to cease publishing these estimates which exceeded the mandate of the Legion. The Legion office was to restrict itself to morality and leave art for the critics.[46]

Barred in theory from making aesthetic judgments, the Legion was restricted to moral evaluations of motion pictures. What criteria and standards were applied by the reviewers to help them make these judgments? The Production Code, of course, was the main document that served as a guideline.[47] Facey indicates that two other documents were used more immediately as operative guides for rating films.[48] They were two pamphlets issued by the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

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[44] Reports, 1936-1949, passim.

[45] Cf. Chapter III, Policy and the Pledge.

[46] Report, 1937, p. 25.

[47] Facey, op. cit., p. 86.

[48] Ibid.

The first was an eight-page anonymous pamphlet, How to Judge the Morality of Motion Pictures. The second was a reprint of "The Morals of the Screen," an article for the October, 1935 Catholic Educational Review by Richard Dana Skinner, the playwright and American theatre historian. These documents antedate all papal and episcopal policy statements, with the exception of Apostolic Delegate Cicognani's speech of October 1, 1933.

It was only after the Legion office had been functioning that Pius XII issued his encyclical to the American Church in particular and to the universal Church in general on June 29, 1936. The encyclical, Vigilanti Cura, could not have been the motivating force for the Legion's foundation, although it was an endorsement of its continued existence. According to Jack Vizzard, Assistant Production Code Administrator and long-time associate of Joseph I. Breen, the first Production Code Administrator, the one great personal force behind the entire affair was Martin Quigley, Sr.[49] The Legion had begun with two laymen, Breen and Quigley, and two priests, Dinneen and Lord, assisted by Msgr. Corrigan, Bishop Cantwell, and Fr. Parsons. It was maintained by Catholic laywomen and a board of eleven laymen and priests under one priest, Fr. McClafferty.

The everyday rating of films was guided by three documents, two of which were written by laymen, and one of which was anonymous. What criteria and norms these documents offered for judging films invite inspection.

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[49] Interview with Mr. Jack Vizzard at Production Code Administration Offices, 8480 Beverly Blvd., Hollywood, Calif., August 17, 1967.

Documents Formative of Policy

The Production Code

The Code consists of six parts: The Preamble, General Principles, Particular Applications, Reasons Supporting the Preamble, Reasons Behind the General Principles, and Reasons Underlying the Particular Applications.[50]

The Preamble declares that films are primarily entertainment "without any explicit purpose of teaching or propaganda." Nevertheless, films "may be directly responsible for spiritual or moral progress, for higher types of social life, and for much correct thinking."

The Reasons Supporting the Preamble are spelled out in over four times the verbiage given to the Preamble itself. They can be summarized as follows: The film is both entertainment and art. As entertainment, the film can have an elevating or degrading effect on the audience. Examples of degrading entertainment are cited: cockfighting, bull fighting, and ancient Roman gladiatorial spectacles. Reactions to these types of entertainment are "unhealthy"--a self-evident truth to the framers of the Code. As art, which the Code defines as "the presentation of human thought, emotion, and experience, in terms of an appeal to the soul through the senses," films once more can have a good or an evil effect. The evil effects of "unclean art, indecent books, suggestive drama" are "obvious." Because films are aimed at the masses rather than at a discriminating elite and because the vivid impact of films is far more powerful than the effect of books or plays, films can have a very good effect or a disastrously evil effect as both art and entertainment. Moreover, the adulation given film stars, the Code fears, tends to evoke sympathy from the audience for the roles they play, even though these may be the roles of morally despicable characters. The Code concludes that films must therefore be more conservatively controlled than other media of art and entertainment.

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[50] Text of Code is taken from Inglis, op. cit., pp. 205-19.

The General Principles are three:

> 1. No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown on the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin.
>
> 2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
>
> 3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.[51]

The Reasons Behind the General Principles are not so much reasons as qualifications. Thus, it is admitted that one can have sympathy for the sinner, but not for his sin; it is granted that individual courts or law officers may be ridiculed or criticized so long as they are seen as exceptions to, rather than representations of, our legal system.

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

The Particular Applications follow rigorously from the Preamble and General Principles with two modifications. The first is the inclusion of many of the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" of pre-Code days which are intended as guidelines for producers who want to avoid offending certain state and municipal censor boards. Respect for the flag, favorable representation of religious ministers, avoidance of ethnic slurs ("nigger," "wop," "kike," etc.), of cruelty to animals and children, and of vulgar and obscene expressions fall into this category. The second modification is really the introduction of another principle: methods of crime must not be presented if there is a danger that they will be instructive for would-be criminals. Thus, methods of concealing firearms, of safecracking, of drug traffic and the administration of narcotics, etc., are forbidden material.

Aside from the "offensive" matter already proscribed by the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls," the two main categories of Particular Applications are those of crime and sex. The concern with sex arises on two counts. First, the Code fears that vivid scenes of sexual passion will arouse the audience to similar passions. Second, the Code fears that light or comic treatment of adultery, rape, and fornication will lower the opprobrium in which they are held by the audience and lead to toleration of the allegedly intolerable.

The Reasons Underlying the Particular Applications on sexual material are enlightening with reference to the subsequent policy of the

Legion, which has been more strict in its judgments on such material than it has been on violence. (Cf. Chapter III.)

In its Reasons Underlying Particular Applications, the Code divides sin into two classes. The first class of sin repels the audience, such as murder, lying, cruelty. The second class of sin exercises a certain amount of attraction for the audience because there is an air of apparent heroism about the sin, such as revenge, leadership in crime, etc. The main type of sin in this second class is sexual sin. Sexual sins are physically attractive and a romantic aura can be built up around adultery and fornication. The Code states that the first class "needs far less care in treatment" because they are "naturally unattractive," although care must be taken not to harden the audience to brutality. "The second class needs real care in handling, as the response of human natures to their appeal is *obvious*." (Italics added.) The Code then points out parenthetically that if there were selective distribution of certain films to specialized theatres that catered to the cultivated elite, films could be made for them without all the care necessary for films which are mass entertainment products, seen by the young and impressionable.

From the foregoing summary, three unproven assumptions emerge as fundamental to the thinking behind the Code:

1. The film audience consists of the masses and a small cultivated elite.

2. The masses are easily influenced by films in the direction of evil, especially to illicit sex.

3. In view of the nature of film distribution, control of films must be utilized to protect the masses from evil influences.

These assumptions can clash at times. Sex-hygiene films, for example, are forbidden by the Code. The reason given is that they are not appropriate for entertainment, but are more suitable for the classroom. The reason films are considered primarily entertainment, however, is because the film audience consists of the masses who must be protected from satirical or shocking portrayals of contemporary culture that the elite could enjoy safely. Some sex-hygiene films, however, are designed for the masses, to instruct them and guide them in an area where the sophisticated elite is presumed knowledgeable.

Nudity or near-nudity, where the female breasts or buttocks are exposed, also is forbidden by the Code. An exception was made, however, in 1939 for documentaries, or semi-documentaries, of other cultures in which nudity of this type is socially acceptable.[52]

It was this Code that the Legion sought to enforce by its own ratings throughout the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's by its own admission and stated declarations.

How to Judge the Morality of Motion Pictures

This pamphlet was authorized by the Episcopal Committee of Motion Pictures. Like the Code, the pamphlet stresses the danger of films in lowering moral standards by casting sympathy on the side of wrongdoing. In this way the film can "preach an immoral doctrine." The pamphlet also holds the film audiences, by the allurements of an attractive presentation, capable of being induced to change their lifelong beliefs and to think that, occasionally at least, "certain sins are virtues and certain virtues sins." Any film contrary to the Ten Commandments is to be considered immoral.

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[52] Resolution of Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, October 25, 1939.

The Morals of the Screen

Skinner's essay is more analytic. He breaks down a film into three elements: plot, theme, and treatment. The plot is the story line of events and circumstances. The theme is the question put to the main character and the way he lives out the answer. Treatment is the visual and auditory presentation of the details of the dramatic action. Any one of these components can offend against the Code by presenting an immoral solution to a human problem. Deceit, treachery, suicide can be approvingly presented as solutions to problems. Sexual activity, even legitimate marital love, can be treated in a way calculated to arouse the passions of the audience. Violence and killing can be glamourized by treatment, justified by theme, and necessary for plot. Skinner fears that such offenses "nine times out of ten lead to immorality." But the main offender is usually through theme and very rarely through plot, a belief shared with Skinner by the Bishops during the Legion campaign.[53]

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[53] Ibid., p. 90.

The concern with theme and its divorce from treatment has long been an operative device in NCOMP ratings dating back to this pamphlet and in force today.[54] The same approach is used by the PCA, dating from the installation of Breen and continuing under Shurlock.[55]

So far in this study, an examination of the origin of the Legion and the main documents formative of its early policy has been offered. Attention will now be turned to policy decisions which set the shape of future policy direction.

Formative Policy Decisions

Professing concern only for the moral values of films, the Legion was faced with a problematic decision in rating the Walter Wanger production of Blockade in 1938. Directed by William Dieterle, this film was sympathetic to the Loyalist [or anti-Church and anti-establishment] side of the Spanish Civil war which it dramatized. Affiliated with the Catholic Church, the Legion felt that it could not fail to score the alleged prejudice of the film. On the other hand, there was nothing suggestive in the treatment or immoral in the theme to warrant condemnation or even an objectionable-in-part rating of B. Therefore the Separate Classification was born, a category which would be used for far different purposes in the future.[56] With the classification this blurb was published: "Many people will regard this picture as containing foreign political propaganda in favor of one side in the present unfortunate struggle in Spain."[57]

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[54] Cf. Tables XVI, XVII and XVIII, XIX.

[55] Interview with Mr. Geoffrey Shurlock, Production Code Administrator, at Production Code Administration offices, 8480 Beverly Blvd., Hollywood, Calif., August 17, 1967.

[56] Cf. Chapter IV, Film Classification.

The Legion, like the Code, had always looked upon the film as a means of mass entertainment and its judgments have been based on this predication, until recent times when the A-IV classification has been used to indicate that films so categorized are not for general consumption.[58] On May 27, 1938, the Legion issued an A-II rating for Damaged Goods, a serious film about venereal disease. The rating was based, for the first time, on the assumption that the film would not be distributed to commercial houses but rather used educationally by Churches and civic groups. When the film was distributed commercially, the Legion promptly (July 15, 1938) reclassified the film as C because it was not "suitable for general exhibition in entertainment motion pictures."[59] The fact that the Legion never again classified a sex education film A-II, which already restricts the film to adults, reinforces the impression that the Legion, following the assumptions of the Code on the masses, assumed a protective and paternalistic posture toward the audience.

From the beginning of the Legion office in 1936, it is known that the producers and distributors, especially Warner Brothers and Metro-

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[57] Report, 1938, p. 24.

[58] Cf. Chapter IV, Sample Films.

[59] Report, 1938, p. 38.

Goldwyn-Mayer, cooperated with the Legion.[60] The first record of producers' cutting scenes from films to obtain a more favorable rating resulted in the change from C to B for Yes, My Darling Daughter on March 4, 1939, when the Legion issued a press release:

> The many and important cuts which were made in the original version of the film have been deemed sufficient to warrant a change in classification. . . . The cut version of the film has been rated as Partly Objectionable because it still contains indications of a light treatment of marriage and parental authority and allusions that fundamental moral standards are changeable.

The release then goes on to quote a letter to the Legion signed by J[ack] L. Warner, dated February 28, 1939:

> I wish to thank you for your cooperation in connection with our picture, Yes, My Darling Daughter and to advise that the revised version of the film, as it is presently showing at the New York Strand Theatre, as approved by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, will be the version which we will show throughout the United States. Changes in the prints of the film that are out will be made as fast as is humanly possible.[61]

Two years later on March 6, 1941, the Legion changed the C rating of This Thing Called Love, a Columbia release, to B. In a press release of that date, the Legion again quoted a letter from an executive, this time Jack Cohn, executive vice-president of Columbia Pictures Corporation. Mr. Cohn expressed almost exactly the sentiments of Mr. Warner and also thanked the Legion "for its cooperation."[62] Columbia had cut some of the offending footage.

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[60] Report, 1936, p. 6.

[61] Report, 1938, pp. 39-40.

[62] Report, 1940, pp. 144-45.

On June 17, 1943 the Legion issued another change of classification from C to B for Lady of Burlesque. The attendant press release quoted no letters and mentioned no cuts, but the meaning was clear:

> Following conferences between officials of the Legion, United Artists' executives and Mr. Hunt Stromberg, producer of the picture, the original objections have been so resolved as to warrant this change of classification.[63]

This relative reticence to mention any changes made in films due to Legion pressure was the first hint of a policy of secrecy, mutually agreed on by both the Legion and the industry. The changes wrought in The Outlaw to raise it from B to C were the last instances of the effectiveness of Legion pressure to be made public.[64] Fr. Sullivan refers to this policy of secrecy as a "gentleman's agreement" on the part of both the industry and NCOMP, to preserve both parties from embarrassment.[65] There is no coercion involved except that if the changes recommended by NCOMP are not made, the more unfavorable rating will be given the film, which producers feel will cause loss of patronage and thus revenue.[66]

The changes made are in matters of treatment, involving the deletion of certain shots. NCOMP and the former Legion have never discussed scripts with the industry, but only finished films, as a matter of policy. The PCA, of course, deals with scripts. The point remains that the Legion has been able to exert enough pressure on the film industry to have films changed.[67]

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[63] Report, 1942, p. 56.

[64] Report, 1948, p. 13.

[65] Interview with Fr. Patrick J. Sullivan, S.J., Executive Secretary of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, at NCOMP offices, 453 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y., May 5, 1967.

[66] Ibid.

Giglio has given a detailed account of the various campaigns mounted against certain films by religious and civic groups after they had been condemned by the Legion.[68] The Legion itself, he has pointed out, never went beyond classifying the films as condemned.[69] Giglio's opinion is that the various campaigns may well have been Pyrrhic victories for the Catholic Church, even where they succeeded in causing a film to lose money, which they did not always do. The campaigns stirred up considerable opposition to strong-arm tactics both from within and without the Church, as he has related in detail.[70]

In the 1958 Report of the Legion to the bishops, Fr. Patrick Sullivan, S.J., then assistant executive secretary, submitted his impressions of the Fund for the Republic Seminar on Religion in a Free Society, held May 5th through 9th in New York City. Fr. Sullivan was an invited participant of this non-sectarian affair which presented eleven papers for discussion. Among the papers were three by Jesuits, John Courtney Murray, Walter Ong, and Gustave Weigel. Fr. Sullivan reported:

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[67] Cf. Chapter V, Censorship.

[68] Giglio, op. cit., pp. 198-225.

[69] Ibid., p. 198.

[70] Ibid., pp. 198-225, esp. pp. 223-25.

> Mr. Norman St. John-Stevas, an English Catholic lawyer and scholar presently at Yale University, to whom the Catholic cause is indebted for his many intelligent and loyal contributions to the seminar discussion, expressed the delicate issue thus: "The last four days have largely been a critique of the Roman Catholic Church. . . . The Catholic problem is an existential problem; it exists in the people's mind. This conference gives to American Catholics a solemn warning that . . . the image of the Catholic Church which has been created in the American mind is not an image of the Church of Christ. It is largely an image of a power structure. Bricks are not made without straw and a part of this responsibility, a heavy part, rests with the Catholics themselves. There is a need for reassessment of attitude."
>
> During the sessions devoted to "Religion, the Free Society and Secular Culture" the National Legion of Decency and the National Office for Decent Literature were specifically discussed. A summary description of the non-Catholic attitude toward these agencies would come to this: the average non-Catholic is very much concerned with the effect of salacious literature and movies upon minors; he is not entirely sure of how best to cope with this very urgent problem, whether through civic action or through legal sanctions but of one thing he is sure, that he will have no part of the Legion or of the National Office for Decent Literature as long as these agencies are identified with economic boycotts and other forms of unilateral exercises of power. This description is based upon public utterances made during the discussions and upon conversations with many of the participants afterwards.[71]

On June 24th of the next year, 1959, the Legion reviewed Anatomy of a Murder, produced by the same man who made The Moon Is Blue, Otto Preminger. The film was a documentary-style account of a murder trial in which rape figured predominantly. The PCA gave the Seal to the film, but the Chicago Police Censorship Board banned the film as obscene.

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[71] Report, 1958, pp. vi-vii.

(The ban was reversed by a later Court order.)[72] Geoffrey Shurlock of the PCA stated that it was this film which won Eric Johnston over to the idea of film classification because a friend of his, who was a judge, told Johnston he was shocked when his children were allowed in the theatre to see this film.[73]

In the 1959 Annual Report the Legion stated: "The Legion could not in conscience give this film a B, much less a C rating. In the interests of a truly moral judgment it must be emphasized that as 'shocking' as this film may be to sensitive people or as questionable as its propriety may be for the impressionable, it is certainly not an immoral film, in the strict sense of that word, either in theme or treatment. . . . [But we feel we had to] inform Hollywood without qualification that we considered certain elements of the picture to be totally unacceptable for a mass medium of entertainment. Finally, the Legion could not ignore the potential injustice which would have been committed against Columbia Pictures through the economic reprisals that would have attended a condemned rating."[74]

The published rating of this film was Separate Classification: "Observation: The clinical analysis with which the subject matter of this film (rape) is so explicitly and frankly detailed is judged to exceed the bounds of moral acceptability and propriety in a mass medium of entertainment."[75]

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[72] Columbia Pictures Corp. v. Chicago, 184 F. Supp. 817 (1959).

[73] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

[74] Report, 1959, p. 16.

That same year the Legion officially praised and recommended films for the first time in its history. These films were Inn of the Sixth Happiness, Embezzled Heaven, The Last Angry Man, and the United Nations' documentary, Power Among Men.[76]

In the years that followed more serious films that treated of Code-proscribed topics received Separate Classification, notably La Dolce Vita. This led to the creation of the A-IV category, which has been examined in the third chapter of this study.

The history of the Legion had turned a corner and was headed in the direction of the present NCOMP, whose structure and operations now require examination.

Present Structure and Operations of NCOMP

There has never been any detailed information published on the administration of NCOMP. Personal observation and investigation by this researcher was the only way to discover how NCOMP operated and direct questions put to officials of NCOMP was the only reliable method of determining its affiliations and structure. Accordingly, during the autumn, winter, and spring of 1966-1967, he visited the office frequently and attended screenings with the reviewers. On May 5, 1967, an interview with Fr. Patrick Sullivan, S.J., the current Executive Secretary of NCOMP, was taped and transcribed. Unless otherwise noted, the contents of this section have been drawn from this 80 minute interview.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

The headquarters of NCOMP consists of Fr. Sullivan's office, large enough to comfortably accommodate a conference of up to ten consultors. It is adjoined by the office of the assistant to the Executive Secretary. At present, there is no one in this position, since Fr. Sullivan, the former assistant, moved up to replace Msgr. Thomas F. Little, who retired to a pastorate on September 30, 1966. Msgr. Little had also begun his work with the Legion as an assistant. (Under former Executive Secretary Msgr. Patrick J. Masterson from 1948, Msgr. Little took his place on June 9, 1953, when Msgr. Masterson died suddenly.) A smaller room accommodates two secretaries who maintain the files and inform consultors of screening schedules. The files of the office flow out from these rooms to adjoining corridors and closets. The office is located in the chancery of the New York Archdiocese, 453 Madison Ave., directly east of St. Patrick's Cathedral. The window of Fr. Sullivan's office provides an unobstructed view of the gothic apse of this structure, which strangely contrasts with the RCA Building and other skyscrapers in the area and casts a medieval presence in an otherwise modern setting.

The Executive Secretary of NCOMP is directly responsible to the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, whose present chairman is Bishop Christopher Weldon of Springfield, Massachusetts, who replaced John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia in 1966. The Committee for Motion Pictures is only one of twenty-four episcopal committees, which range from that for welfare to that for liturgy. These committees, part of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, are not part of the conference secretariat headed by general secretary Bishop Paul F. Tanner. The secretariat, titled the United States Catholic Conference, Inc., includes nineteen separate departments from UN Affairs to Prison Chaplains. NCOMP is often mistakenly placed within this secretariat, but actually it is outside of this bureaucracy and directly under the National Conference through the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures.

NCOMP's only special connection with the New York Archdiocese is geographical. It is supported by appropriations made by the National Conference which, among other expenses, pays rent for office space to the New York Archdiocese. Cardinal Spellman is not a member of the Episcopal Committee.

The Committee does not review nor rate films. This is done by the lay and clerical reviewers of NCOMP, under the direct supervision of Fr. Sullivan. Early in November of each year, NCOMP submits a confidential report to the Committee on its activities for the past year and makes recommendations for future policy. The Report frequently contains information about the film industry taken from trade publications to inform committee members on current trends in production and distribution of films, the actions of the Production Code Administration, and other background matters. The Committee in turn submits the report to the National Conference at its annual meeting in mid-November. The report is usually orally presented in precis form by the Episcopal Chairman.

Until 1965 the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures was identical with the Episcopal Committee for Radio and Television, although there was no office for radio and television parallel to NCOMP. At the 1965 meeting of the American bishops, however, such an office was established: The National Catholic Office for Radio and Television (NCORT). At the same time a new committee was established separate from the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, although some bishops, like Bishop Weldon, serve on both committees.

NCORT has its office in the RCA Building at Rockefeller Plaza and is administered by a layman, Charles E. Reilly, Jr. Unlike the film office, NCORT has nothing to do with any moral ratings of broadcast programs, but rather serves as a public relations office for the Church in relation to broadcasting. It answers queries, supplies technical advisors for some programs, and aids in the distribution of Catholic radio and television programs.[77]

On an individual basis, both NCORT and NCOMP report to the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications in Rome. One of the many new commissions established since the Second Vatican Council, this commission is neither a legislative or executive body.[78] It merely acts as a clearing house for information for the various international Catholic communications organizations, such as the Office Catholique International du Cinema, UNDA for broadcasting, and the International Catholic Press Association for print media. A member of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications usually attends conventions of these organizations as an observer.

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[77] Background Information (New York: Catholic Office for Radio and Television, 1967). (Mimeographed.)

[78] Originally established by Pope Pius XII as the Pontifical Motion Picture Commission (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 43 /1951/, 30), the commission was expanded to include radio and television by the encyclical Miranda Prorsus (1957). The commission was given permanent status by Pope John XXIII in his Boni Pastoris (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 51 /1959/, 183-187). Finally, Pope Paul VI changed the commission's title and expanded it further to include the print media (In fructibus multis, Acta Apostolicae Sedis 56 /1964/, 289-292).

NCOMP has been a member of the Office Catholique International du Cinema (OCIC) since 1938.[79] Since 1948, the Executive Secretary has attended the annual congresses of the OCIC, which are held in different countries each year.[80] The OCIC has always been a federation of equal members (each country has one vote on OCIC resolutions). The OCIC has a current membership of 25 nations and serves as a mutual aid society in providing information about the film world and in advisement in forming policy.[81]

Does NCOMP have any affiliations with structures outside the Church? Since the original Legion campaign had so much to do with the formation of the Production Code Administration, Fr. Sullivan was asked if there were any liaison with this office.

> What is our liaison with them [the PCA]? It's non-existent in any sense that we compare notes on films. Occasionally--well, how best to put this? We invite, for example, participation by the MPAA [Motion Picture Association of America, the parent body of the PCA] at the OCIC meetings

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[79] Report, 1937, p. 84.

[80] Reports, 1948-1967.

[81] Constitution of the Office Catholique International du Cinema (OCIC) (Brussels: OCIC, 1933), Articles 1 and 2.

and, generally speaking, the MPAA will send one of the administrative officers from the PCA to attend. But in the operation of this national office, there is no official, or even unofficial, liaison between the PCA and this office. Quite obviously, however, we know one another and when the Code Authority people are in New York, they may come by and pay their respects and they may compare notes on various [already rated] films.

There's nothing like our calling up the PCA on a given film and saying: "What are you going to do about that film?" We will of course call the MPAA on occasion to find out whether or not a film has received a Code Seal, or whether or not it has received a limitation for mature audiences.

. . . .

I was just going to say that we are talking about the present. If we go back to the past, the man who was responsible for the idea of the PCA was Martin Quigley, Sr. And the man who was responsible for selling the bishops on the idea of organizing a Legion of Decency was Martin Quigley, Sr. Now Martin Quigley, Sr. used to be consulted by both PCA and by the Legion--that is, the Legion of Decency and individual producers whenever a problem arose [sic]. But this is all of historical interest only.

I would make one further comment that this office has felt that occasionally in the past that it is necessary to criticize individual decisions of the Production Code Authority [=Administration] and such criticism has been expressed publicly in the past. Yes. But this is not liaison. It's a question of how effective they are in their administration. . . . [F]requently enough . . . when a producer has a problematic film, he will show it to the National Catholic Office in order to obtain a rating. And if he is able to quote get by the National Office without a C rating unquote, then he will use that as a wedge with the PCA to get their approval of the film. This has happened from time to time, yes.

Secondly, with a controversial film, such as Virginia Woolf or Alfie, and others of that order, our decision to accept the film with reservations in the A-IV category has contributed to the decision of the MPAA to give the film, finally, a Seal of Approval.[82]

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[82] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

Geoffrey Shurlock, PCA administrator, has stated that he is most interested in NCOMP ratings and the reasons for them, both of which he and his assistants follow regularly.[83] This was proven at a morning conference of the PCA which the researcher attended (August 16, 1967) when Mr. Shurlock from his knowledge of NCOMP policy predicted the rating a film in script stage would ultimately receive. This projected rating influenced the advice PCA officials gave producers who sought their counsel.

What about other groups connected with the moral evaluation of films? Does NCOMP have any relationship to them? Fr. Sullivan stated:

> We have no official lines of communication, cooperation, or collaboration with any other office of review. Informally, we have contact with the Broadcast and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches /Protestant/. We have been thinking of a mutual publication. But this is still in the talking stage.[84]

NCOMP seems to be relatively independent. Unlike the PCA, it does not have to bite the hand that feeds it, an action which self-regulatory agencies are at times automatically forced to perform. NCOMP is supported by subsidies from the National Council of Catholic Bishops, a body as refractory as Congress to executive pressure. No single person can dictate the policy of the office which is subject to committee rule. The Executive Secretary is the executive, but he is subject to review. If he makes an egregious blunder, he must answer to the Committee for it and may be replaced. The pressures on him are thus negative and post factum.

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[83] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

[84] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

So much for the foreign policy, as it were, of NCOMP toward other organizations both within and without the Church. What of the inner structure of NCOMP, its executive personnel, and the mechanics of the reviewing process? (The contents of the reviewing process and the background and qualifications of the NCOMP reviewers are studied in Chapter IV, NCOMP Reviewers.)

Although there is no official Assistant Executive Secretary, as Fr. Sullivan was himself from 1957 until his promotion in 1966, he is assisted by Miss Mary Evans, a graduate of Swathmore who had studied film under Andrew Sarris, film critic of The Village Voice and associate editor of Film Culture. Employed full-time, Miss Evans writes most of the reviews for the Catholic Film Newsletter[85] and all the capsule reviews of the Guide to Current Films.[86] Formerly a writer with Sports Illustrated, Miss Evans also aids Fr. Sullivan in research on developments in the film industry.

Although almost all of the NCOMP reviewers are now the consultors, there is still a number of IFCA reviewers who assist NCOMP. This group is still directed by Mrs. Mary Harden Looram, who has been in charge of IFCA reviewers since 1930, five years before they began to assist the Legion. Mother of three and grandmother of 11, Mrs. Looram attended

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[85] This publication is discussed in Appendix B.

[86] Cf. Chapter V, pp. 300, 306, infra.

Barnard College.

The relationship of the IFCA reviewers to NCOMP is hard to define. According to Mrs. Looram, there are now only ten active members who attend more than one screening a week.[87] There are about ten other members who show up irregularly. These twenty-odd IFCA members enable Mrs. Looram to send five or six reviewers to each screening. Like Mrs. Looram herself, many of the IFCA reviewers antedate NCOMP and the Legion. This small group is the result of attrition from the 98 reviewers of 1936. From the personal observation of the researcher at rating sessions, it appears that seven of the IFCA reviewers have their opinions considered equally with the consultors. These seven IFCA reviewers have, for the purposes of this study, been included among the 84 consultors who in fact make up the total number of relevant reviewers affecting NCOMP ratings.

Of the 84 consultors (including the seven IFCA reviewers), 68 see more than one film a month for NCOMP. Among these 68, 38 see two or three films each month, 11 see four films each month, ten see five, five see six, three see eight, and one consultor sees 12 films each month.[88]

There is no formal process for choosing consultors. Through mutual acquaintances or professional associations, various individuals express an interest in becoming consultors. They are interviewed by Fr. Sullivan. If he is satisfied that they have the requisite intelligence and interest, they are sent a weekly list of the NCOMP screening schedule. If the quality of their reports are poor, or if they fail to show up for screenings, they are dropped from NCOMP. What constitutes failure to show up, and for how long a period, is an elastic concept with Fr. Sullivan, depending on how much he values the individual's opinions.

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[87] Interview with Mrs. Mary Harden Looram, Chairlady, Motion Picture Division, International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, at NCOMP offices, 453 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y., September 26, 1967.

[88] Information from NCOMP files.

The Executive Secretary receives a written report for all films from each consultor and IFCA member who has attended the screenings. The reports are in no set format and range from short paragraphs to two pages of single-space typed reviews. Each report recommends a rating with a reason usually assigned for the rating. The reports are mailed in and are due by Monday of the week after the screening of the film.

Each Tuesday the Executive Secretary meets with the rating staff. Regular members are Miss Mary Evans, Mrs. Looram, a representative of the IFCA reviewers, one of three Catholic film critics from the New York area, and two other consultors. There is no particular pattern of the consultors who attend the rating session, although one of the two is frequently a priest. If there is a problem picture involved, some outside person conversant with the area treated may be invited. This was the case with Ulysses, when a Columbia University doctoral candidate in English was invited because his specialty was Joyce. On important problem pictures, Fr. Sullivan will call up Henry Herx, the lay director of the National Center for Film Study in Chicago to get his opinion and that of his advisors.[89]

Generally the rating sessions are routine. Fr. Sullivan reads the reports of the consultors to the group. Each person present is asked to give his own rating and the reason for that rating. The matter is debated and then Fr. Sullivan decides, from the discussion and the reports, the final rating, giving a rough verbal draft of what he will publish as the reason for the rating.

If there is an especially important problem film, it may require several extra sessions; an example of this type of film was Hurry Sundown, a Preminger film:

> I dare say that on that film we had five or six different conferences. We even involved our Chicago office--had representatives, Henry Herx and one other gentleman from Chicago office, who were in New York, and we had a special conference with them on the film.[90]

The researcher observed three different routine rating sessions and the experience confirmed Fr. Sullivan's description of the process. Below is an excerpt of one such session on August 1, 1967:

> Fr. Sullivan has read reports and has suggested an A-I category for Counterpoint as a possibility:
>
> > IFCA representative: Not A-I because children would not understand the plot.
> >
> > Consultor 1: I would say A-I precisely because the children would not understand the plot--they would not understand the immorality and therefore would not be harmed.

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[89] Cf. Appendix B.

[90] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

Fr. Sullivan: A couple of the reports speak about too much brutality. Do [all of] you think so? Was there brutality? What kind? Too much?

Evans: I don't think so, especially in view of The Dirty Dozen.

Consultor 1: The violence is justified; it's needed for the plot.

IFCA representative: I agree.

Fr. Sullivan: The reports also say that 'bastard' and 'whore' are words used in the dialogue.

Consultor 2: Not worth worrying about.

Sullivan: Well, A-II seems to be the consensus of the reports. Not A-I due to incomprehensibility and language. Anything else against an A-I?

IFCA representative: No.

Consultor 2: No moral reason. But it would bore kids.

Fr. Sullivan: Well, we worry about boring the kids, because if they are bored they will notice little details when their interest perks up and some things may be interpreted all out of proportion. Like the language, for instance. Even though it is not a moral question, it is part of our service to parents.

Consultor 1: OK, A-II is a better guide to parents.

. . . .

Rating of film The Exterminating Angel:

. . . .

Consultor 1: Deep, generalized, well done: A-IV.

Consultor 2: Anti-clerical, anti-church, anti-establishment, but well done--hits at problems of modern society: A-IV.

Fr. Sullivan: A-IV means we have reservations. Wouldn't mature Catholics be offended if we thought they had to be protected from this kind of film? A-III seems better.[91]

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[91] Transcript of NCOMP rating session, August 1, 1967, pp. 2, 5.

Fr. Sullivan maintains that he does not base his decision on the number of ratings given for any given category, but rather on the reasons given: "It's not a nosecount, but a qualitative study of the opinions submitted." It is quite clear to the observer that Fr. Sullivan is in complete command of the rating sessions, although this command is exercised in a suave and pleasant manner. The final rating is his responsibility.

Judging from the NCOMP screening schedules of the past two years, there are an average of 5 or 6 screenings a week mornings and afternoons from Monday through Thursday. Each month there are two to five evening screenings, usually on Wednesdays. Some of these evening screenings are of films already screened during the day. These evening screenings are of more important films that many of the consultors, due to personal schedules, could not see otherwise.

There are some weeks during the summer and Christmas-New Year holiday season when no films or only one or two are shown. From 1959 to 1966 the number of films rated annually has ranged from 289 to 258 with an average of 275.[92]

How are films chosen for review? Fr. Sullivan explained:

All the major American film companies, which maintain private screening facilities in mid-town Manhattan, offer a screening to the office prior to the release date of the film in question. This includes a number of foreign films (between 88 and 60 annually),[93] that are distributed by subsidiaries of the major American companies. The reason for this is that most exhibitors want to know the NCOMP rating for a film before they accept it and thus favorable NCOMP ratings are essential for any broad film distribution. This does not obtain for limited art house exposures. The independent film makers or small importers of foreign films often, but not always, also offer a screening to NCOMP in the hope that the film will be reviewed favorably by the Catholic Film Newsletter, published with the aid of the National Center for Film Study, the NCOMP educational affiliate. These independent screenings are usually in public theatres either during the morning or, at times, during a regular public performance to which a limited number of NCOMP reviewers are given passes.

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[92] Cf. Table XX, Appendix A.

[93] Cf. Table XXI, Appendix A.

In some cases, independent films that show promise of high quality are not submitted to NCOMP reviewing by the producers or distributors. In these instances, NCOMP may request permission to review them. This was the case with Ulysses, a film whose director refused on principle to submit to any ratings or state censorship of any kind.

It appears therefore that NCOMP has most of its films chosen for it by the major companies and some of the independents. The films that it chooses for itself, when they are not submitted, are important films and problem films. By "important films," NCOMP means films that either involved large production expense and therefore would require wide distribution and extensive promotion to earn a profit or enjoyed the talents of famous directors and performers and thus showed promise of being successful both at the box office and with the critics. By "problem films," NCOMP means films whose advance trade publicity indicates that they will violate the Code or the present no-exception NCOMP policy against total frontal nudity (bare backsides may be tolerated, as in The Bible).[94] Cheap exploitation films are generally ignored by NCOMP, since this type of film does not apply for a Code Seal of Approval. Their advertising renders them self-evidently intended as non-wholesome entertainment. Moreover, films of this type frequently are distributed by "blitz" or "saturation" booking: that is, simultaneous release in many theatres over a wide area that would antedate the publication of any classification. It has not always been thus. The early Legion reviewed just about everything that appeared on the screen, including foreign language films without subtitles. In the 1930's, the IFCA provided reviewers who understood French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, and Swedish.[95]

This chapter has provided the context for understanding the policy and practice of NCOMP. The policy of NCOMP has been examined in the next chapter.

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[94] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[95] Report, 1936, p. 3.

CHAPTER III

POLICY

The settled course of action adopted by NCOMP is the classification of films according to categories of moral acceptability. The actual classification of specific films will be studied in detail in the next chapter. In this chapter, the reasons for film classification which NCOMP has made public will be studied. The record of policy statements pertinent to our study begins in 1957, when the old Legion began to change into the current NCOMP.[1] After these statements have been studied, pertinent Papal documents, the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication, and policy pronouncements of the Office Catholique du Cinema will be presented as possible sources of NCOMP policy.

Fundamental Policy

Preliminary to this study of policy certain fundamental concepts must be made clear: What does the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures mean when it says that a film is immoral? What is the obligation of Catholics to avoid immoral films? What is the obligation of Catholics to follow the film classifications of NCOMP?

For NCOMP, a film can be immoral on two separate counts: theme and treatment. The theme of the film is the statement about life that the writer and director intend to make through the dramatic action of the characters. The treatment of the film consists of the audio-visual presentation of details in the unfolding of the drama. Thus, a film with blasphemous dialogue or nudity might be considered immoral because of its treatment. A film that portrayed murder or adultery in such a way that they did not appear evil might be considered immoral because of its theme: that murder or adultery are not wrong.

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[1] Msgr. Thomas F. Little, "The Modern Legion and Its Modern Outlook," America, December 11, 1965, p. 744.

Properly, of course, no thing is moral or immoral. Only people are moral or immoral. Calling a film immoral, therefore, is a shorthand expression for calling the act of seeing the film immoral. When NCOMP says that a film has an immoral theme, it means that those seeing it are in danger of agreeing with and making their own the statement of the film about life. When NCOMP says that a film has an immoral treatment, it means that those seeing it are in danger of temptation to commit a sin.

When one is in a situation where temptation to sin is present, according to Catholic theology one is in "an occasion of sin." Catholics are obliged to avoid "occasions of sin." The gravity of this obligation varies in direct proportion to the seriousness of the type of sin involved as well as the power of the temptation presented by the occasion.

When a film is rated B, it means that it may well place the average viewer in "an occasion of sin." When a film is rated C, it means that it almost certainly will place the viewer in "an occasion of sin."[2]

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[2] Report, 1940, p. 59.

Catholics are bound to avoid immoral films because they are "occasions of sin." The ratings of NCOMP represent the judgment of that office on the morality or immorality of films. They are in no way the law of the Church, but an information service provided by an office of the Church. The ratings are not considered infallible; they are opinions offered by alleged experts. To ignore these ratings would be imprudent, not in any way disobedient to Church law.[3]

Catholics are therefore obliged to follow NCOMP ratings under the imprecise obligation of prudence. It is imprecise, because what is prudent for one individual may not be prudent for another. One person may judge that certain B or C movies are in no way likely to be "occasions of sin" for him, while they may be for the average Catholic viewer.

To overcome this loophole, the Legion and NCOMP have declared that there is also an obligation to follow NCOMP ratings under the obligation of charity. Charity is a moral virtue that obliges men, among other things, to give good example to the neighbour and to uphold the moral fibre of society.[4]

Thus, even though an individual Catholic might ignore the ratings in a particular case because he was reasonably sure that for him there would be no "occasion of sin," he would be giving bad example to his

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[3] Ibid., p. 60.

[4] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

Catholic neighbour for whom the same film would be such an occasion.

Secondly, by ignoring NCOMP ratings an individual Catholic is weakening the intended boycott on immoral films thus encouraging further production of immoral films. Immoral films, the argument runs, have a corrupting influence on society, especially on youth, and thus weaken the collective moral fibre of the community.

This second argument, as will be seen in NCOMP policy statements, has assumed a predominant role in recent years: So much so, in fact, that mention of "occasions of sin" has melted into the background. If one is concerned about youth in general or the moral fibre of the nation, then one can condemn a film not for any immorality it might contain, but merely because it might set a trend that would become immoral. Such was the reason The Pawnbroker was condemned.[5]

The above notions and arguments are fundamental to an understanding of NCOMP policy as it has developed since 1936 and especially since 1957. The stage is now set for an examination of that policy.

Policy and the Pledge

The basic policy of both the old Legion and the current NCOMP is one and the same:

1. To protect Catholics and others from occasions of sin.
2. To discourage producers from making immoral films.
3. To encourage films for family entertainment.

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[5] Judy Stone, "The Legion of Decency: What's Nude?" Ramparts, IV, No. 5 (September, 1965), p. 53.

4. To assist parents in guarding their children from immoral films.

5. to render government censorship unnecessary.

The difference between the old Legion and NCOMP is the understanding of what constitutes an immoral film, as the national climate of opinion has changed since 1934, and growing recognition of the plurality and diversity of the mass audience. An addition to policy is the positive encouragement of good films which NCOMP admits is not necessarily the same kind of film as a family film.[6]

The change in emphasis and attitude over the years is seen in three forms of the pledge Catholics have been asked to take to support the Legion. The first form dates from April of 1934 and reflects the militance of the campaign:

> I wish to join the Legion of Decency which condemns vile and unwholesome moving pictures. I unite with all those who protest against them as a grave menace to youth, to home life, to country and to religion.
>
> I condemn absolutely those salacious motion pictures which, with other degrading agencies, are corrupting public morals and promoting a sex mania in our land.
>
> I shall do all that I can to arouse public opinion against the portrayal of vice as a normal condition of affairs, and against depicting criminals of any class as heroes and heroines, presenting their filthy philosophy of life as something acceptable to decent men and women.
>
> I unite with all those who condemn the display of suggestive advertisements on bill-boards, at theatre entrances and the favorable notices given to immoral motion pictures.

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[6] Report, 1962, p. 22.

> Considering these evils, I hereby promise to remain away from all motion pictures except those which do not offend decency and Christian morality. I promise further to secure as many members as possible for the Legion of Decency.
>
> I make this protest in a spirit of self-respect and with the conviction that the American public does not demand filthy pictures, but clean entertainment and educational features.[7]

This is the first form of the pledge recorded. There were different versions used throughout the country, but in 1945 one form of the pledge, first proposed in November of 1934, was officially adopted as the pledge.

> I condemn indecent and immoral pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals.
>
> I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest them.
>
> I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. As a member of the Legion of Decency, I pledge myself to stay away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.[8]

In 1960 a new pledge was adopted:

> I promise to promote by word and deed what is morally and artistically good in motion picture entertainment.
>
> I promise to discourage indecent, immoral and unwholesome motion pictures especially by my good example and always in a responsible and civic-minded manner.
>
> I promise to guide those under my care and influence in their choice of motion pictures that are morally and culturally inspiring.
>
> I promise not to cooperate by my patronage with theatres which regularly show objectionable films.

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[7] Facey, op. cit., p. 144.

[8] Report, 1944, p. 122.

> I promise as a member of the Legion of Decency to acquaint myself with its aims, to consult with its classifications and to unite with all men of good will in promoting high and noble standards in motion picture entertainment.
>
> I freely make these solemn resolutions to the honor of God, for the good of my soul and for the welfare of my country.[9]

Just as the pledge itself moved from militant outrage to a moderate pronouncement in favor of acknowledged good and against immorality, the understanding of the obligation to abide by the pledge became more refined with the passage of years. Msgr. McClafferty considered the obligation to follow the Legion ratings identical with the already existing obligation to avoid occasions of sin.[10] He never went so far as to claim that the Legion ratings had the force of ecclesiastical law. But he did feel that the Legion, as established by the American bishops, stood for directives of the bishops, whom, he felt, were competent to determine what constituted an occasion of sin. Anyone ignoring the Legion classifications would be guilty at least of imprudence. He never states that the obligation is serious, but implies that it is: ". . . the duty of supporting the campaign . . . engender(s) an obligation perhaps less _grave_ . . ."[11] This was in 1940.

In 1946 the Redemptorist moralist, Fr. Francis J. Connell, wrote:

> I would not hesitate to preach to Catholics that the average person who is in the habit of going to the movies frequently and who neglects to inquire about the moral aspect /=following Legion ratings/ of the pictures he

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[9] _Report, 1960_, p. 18.

[10] _Report, 1940_, pp. 59-61.

[11] _Ibid._, p. 61. (Italics added.)

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> attends will eventually be guilty of a grave sin of imprudence, because on some occasions he will very likely put himself in the proximate danger of mortal sin without any justifying reason.
>
> . . . .
>
> Whatever might be said theoretically about attendance at C pictures in practice a person could be unhesitatingly charged with mortal sin by going to see even one such picture.[12]

Fr. Connell is noted for his strict views and he did not at any time speak officially for the Legion. At the time the American Ecclesiastical Review, a sort of professional journal for parish priests, was somewhat influential, and this article helped establish an attitude among many Catholics about the force of Legion ratings that was fundamentally untrue. Yet the Legion never disavowed the remarks of Fr. Connell.

From the context of Fr. Connell's statements about the corruptive nature of C films and B films, it is evident that he is thinking almost exclusively in terms of sexual sins, the temptations to which are conceived of as immediate and urgent.

Fr. Connell did not moderate his views with the passage of time. In 1957, commenting on the Papal encyclical Miranda Prorsus, he reaffirmed his earlier views and maintained that they were confirmed by the encyclical.[13]

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[12] Fr. Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R., "How Should Priests Direct People Regarding the Movies?" The American Ecclesiastical Review, CXIV, No. 4 (April, 1946), pp. 246, 248.

[13] Fr. Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R., "Pope Pius XII and the Legion of Decency," The American Ecclesiastical Review, CXXXVII, No. 12 (December, 1957), p. 396, n. 7.

In 1957 two Jesuit moralists, Frs. John Ford and Gerald Kelly, wrote a scholarly monograph on the Legion for Theological Studies, a journal intended for professional theologians, which is nonetheless read by many priests. In their discussion of the obligation to observe Legion ratings, they express a presupposition all too often ignored but ever present in statements about Catholics' obligations:

> . . . words such as "ought," "must," "duty," "obligation," and so forth are used in two senses in ordinary parlance and in official [ecclesiastical] documents. In the strict sense, all these words imply precepts, that is, duties or obligations that oblige under pain of sin. In a wider sense, however, they can and do mean what is the better thing to do, the fitting thing, the appropriate thing, and so forth.[14]

With this distinction understood, what is the obligation of the pledge? First, they ask, what is the obligation to even learn about the Legion ratings, independent of one's obligation to follow them?

> In the first case--the need of proper information to protect oneself from danger--there could be a serious obligation only if there existed a presumption, based on one's own experience or the moral status of movies, that one would be unjustifiably exposing oneself to the proximate danger of serious sin; . . . The presumption based on personal experience is purely relative and is therefore a matter for each individual to decide. . . . The presumption against the [moral status of] the movies is simply not realized today, because the majority of films are classified as A; and of the remainder (B and C films) only a relatively small number can be considered as proximate occasions of mortal sin for the generality of men.
>
> As for the second case--the duty of charity to neighbors (i.e., duty of avoiding unjustifiable scandal) and duty to the common good--every theologian surely realizes how difficult it is to formulate exact practical rules about serious

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[14] Fr. John Ford, S.J., and Fr. Gerald Kelly, S.J., "The Legion of Decency," Theological Studies, XVIII (1957), p. 416.

> and unjustifiable scandal and how it is even more difficult to estimate the gravity of social obligations: e.g., the duty of voting. . . .
>
> Finally, as regards parental duty, it might be easy enough to recognize in particular cases when parental negligence is serious; but the difficulty of giving general aprioristic rules about this is certainly . . . very difficult indeed and defies generalizations.[15]

Ford and Kelly do, however, endorse the consultation of Legion ratings as an ideal attitude that recommends itself. They further state that one should adopt the 'general policy' of not attending B or C films and of keeping one's children away from films that are classified for adults only. They add: ". . . we have deliberately spoken of a 'general' policy and not in terms of absolutes, because we think that even when one is speaking of the better thing to do, one can hardly rule out all attendance at B or C films."[16] Later in the article, both point out: "The official [ecclesiastical] documents have avoided (and, we might suggest, deliberately avoided) clear statements that attendance at any class or category of motion pictures is mortally sinful."[17]

Neither Ford nor Kelly spoke officially for the Legion. As in the case of Fr. Connell's stricter views, the Legion has never criticized nor taken issue with any of their statements.

In 1967 Fr. Sullivan, Executive Secretary of NCOMP, was asked what he thought was the obligation of filmgoers. He felt that there were two distinct obligations:

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[15] Ibid., pp. 419-20.

[16] Ibid., p. 417.

[17] Ibid., p. 426.

> . . . to the filmgoer himself and to the common good. To himself, he has the personal obligation to avoid seeing that type of film, which will present some type of problem to his own personal conscience. Secondly, even with regard to films which may not here and now be a moral problem to him because of his special maturity, etc., nevertheless, as a patron of films, if he goes to see problematic films, he is endorsing and giving public support to them. He is, I would say, from the viewpoint of charity, being negligent.[18]

The official spokesman, like the official documents referred to by Ford and Kelly, will not make any clear declaration of definite obligation. The substance of what Fr. Sullivan says is consonant with what Msgr. McClafferty had said almost thirty years previously. There is, however, a considerable difference in tone. First of all there is the explicit mention of personal conscience, thus the tacit acceptance of many grades of difference among the audience, and the use of the catch-all phrase, "problematic films" instead of the standard cliches of denunciation: "filthy philosophy," and "degrading spectacles."

In his statement of August 22, 1938, Archbishop McNicholas had stated:

> The Legion of Decency operates under the auspices of the Catholic Bishops whose pastoral solicitude for souls obliges them, especially in a medium so influential as the cinema, to oppose vigorously every trend which threatens to invade the domain of the fixed and invariable principles of morality expressed in the natural and Divine law.[19]

When Fr. Sullivan in 1967 was asked by what right the Catholic Church judged the morality of films, if indeed it so did, he replied:

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[18] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[19] Report, 1937, p. 80.

> The Church? What type of Church are we talking about here? The ecclesiastical hierarchy or the people of God? The Legion started as an operation of the "establishment." Now, since the Council /Second Vatican Council/, it /NCOMP/ tries to look upon itself as an agency of the people of God, and because of this difference of nuance, there's a difference in what the answer would be. But, substantially, I think the new answer is the same as the old answer: The teaching Church feels that it has a responsibility to offer moral guidance to the faithful in their selection of films because it is presumed that films can pose moral problems for the individual viewer. I think this would have been the approach of the early Legion. Since the Council, the same thing is true but with this added nuance: the people of God are themselves looking for information about films and therefore they support a concept of an agency within their Church, which will supply them with this needed guidance.[20]

There is more than a mere shade of difference in this new "nuance" and it is not exactly that between an establishment and a common people of God. It is rather that difference between issuing warnings of grave danger, as in the past, with authority and of now "offering guidance" as an informational service to those who want it. Since 1957, there have been seven major policy statements that have directed this change and two policy decisions that have conditioned it: the ratings given to The Pawnbroker and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Both documents and events require examination.

Policy Statements 1957-1966

The first policy statement in question is an article in America by Bishop William A. Scully, then chairman of the Episcopal Committee for

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[20] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

Motion Pictures.[21] Bishop Scully begins on the positive note that the mass media have broadened the lives of many people who otherwise would remain ignorant of the art, beauty, and affairs of the great world. At the same time, he deplores the fact that these same media have shown a potential for exploiting the "sensational, violent, or prurient" in the eyes of those who would otherwise be innocent. "The harm that it can do and has already done to our youth is something no decent person can deny." Scully then points out that the Legion is not a censoring body, but merely "speaks to American Catholics, giving them thoughtful moral estimates of motion pictures." Catholics are "urged" not to attend movies objected to by the Legion. The reason is not that they may be corrupted by such a single viewing but that "by their attendance they [might] encourage movie producers to continue to manufacture films of this kind." The Legion protests against this danger to our country as labor unions protest against unhealthy working conditions. Immoral films constitute "a real and present danger to the minds and souls of men, and especially of our youth." These warnings and urgings take up the first half of the article.

In the second half of the article, Bishop Scully calls for the formation of adult and secondary film-education groups to study seriously the artistic and moral values of films, after the fashion of European Catholic Cineclubs. This is "affirmative" work which will enable people to be their own critics. Scully quotes Msgr. Angelo Dell'Acqua, Substitute Papal Secretary of State, who wrote in Pius XII's name to the OCIC congress in Havana, January 4-7, 1957: ". . . this necessary action [film classification] must be accompanied by an educational endeavour in the strict sense."

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[21] Bishop William A. Scully, "The Movies: A Positive Plan," America, March 30, 1957, pp. 726-27.

The second document is a statement made on November 15, 1957, not by the Legion or by the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, but by the Bishops of the United States. Censorship, as the document is titled, is an official statement by all the American bishops declaring the stand of the Church in the United States on the question of censorship.[22] The statement was made five months after the Supreme Court decision on the Roth case stated: "We hold that obscenity is not within the area of constitutionally protected speech or press."[23]

The bishops quote the Roth decision with approval, calling it "encouraging." The essence of the episcopal argument is simple. Every man has a right to know and this involves the freedom of expression in all media so that right will not be frustrated. This freedom is especially essential to a democratic form of government which depends on an enlightened electorate, and to the Church which must be free to preach the gospel. Essential as this freedom is, it has limits imposed by the common good which demands "a respect for the rights of others, a regard for public order, and a positive deference to those human, moral and social values which are our common human heritage."[24]

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[22] Censorship: A Statement of the Bishops of the United States, November 15, 1957 (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1957).

[23] Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476 (1957).

It would be ideal, the bishops believe, if no legal restraints were necessary to see that freedom of expression were exercised within reasonable limits. The fact is that legal restraints are necessary, as the Roth case illustrates. Nevertheless, it is the American juridical tradition, and rightly so, to opt for minimum restraints. Consequently, there is an inevitable gap between what is legally punishable and what is legally allowable but "may still defy the moral standards of a notable number in the community." Therefore, "/It/ must be recognized that civil legislation by itself does not constitute an adequate standard of morality."[25]

This inadequacy of the civil arm to prevent abuse of the freedom of expression is the basis for the existence of the Legion: "A knowledge of this truth together with the knowledge that offensive materials on the stage and screen and in publications have a harmful effect moved the Bishops of the United States to set up agencies to work in the field--for motion pictures, the National Legion of Decency; for printed publications, the National Office for Decent Literature."[26]

The bishops then describe the operations of both agencies as parallel:

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[24] Censorship: A Statement of the Bishops of the United States, November 15, 1957, op. cit., p. 1.

[25] Ibid., p. 2.

[26] Ibid.

> The function of these agencies is related in character. Each evaluates and offers the evaluation to those interested. Each seeks to enlist in a proper and lawful manner the cooperation of those who can curb the evil. Each invites the help of all people in the support of its objectives. Each endeavours through positive action to form habits of artistic taste which will move people to seek out and patronize the good. In their work they reflect the moral teaching of the Church. Neither agency exercises censorship in any true sense of the word.
>
> . . . .
>
> The right to speak out in favor of good morals can hardly be challenged in a democracy such as ours. It is a long-standing tradition of this country that groups large and small have given expression of their concern over injustice, political, social and economic. Their efforts, put forth within the framework of the law, have been directed toward dislodging evils against which the law itself is powerless. . . . The rights these agencies seek to protect are among the most important and sacred--the right to parents to bring up their children in an atmosphere reasonably free from defilement, the right of children to be protected from grave and insidious moral danger, the right of all not to be assailed at every turn by a display of indecency.[27]

Although the Pope's encyclical on film, television and radio, Miranda Prorsus was published on September 8th, more than two months before this statement was made by the bishops, there is not one reference to it. The only explicit reference to an outside source is to the Supreme Court of the United States in the Roth decision. Significant, too, is the utter lack of mention of obligation on the part of Catholics to follow Legion ratings. The ratings are viewed as a needed service freely offered.

In January of 1958 the Legion introduced a new category for classification, A-III. Formerly, those films that were not objectionable in part (B) or condemned (C) were approved either for everyone (A-I) or for adults only (A-II). The new A-III category took the place of the old adults-only A-II, which now became a category for adults and adolescents. The Legion was beginning to break the mass audience up into more refined age levels. Some films which the Legion would have had to classify B because of their unsuitability for adolescents were now able to receive an A-III. These films are generally the type that deal realistically with evil, but have a moral theme.[28] Suddenly, Last Summer, a powerful Tennessee Williams examination of homosexuality and abnormal mother-son relationships, was an example of an A-III film.

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[27] Ibid., pp. 2-3. (Italics added.)

In the years that followed, more and more films of quality production from major studios dealt with the problem of evil in ways that the Legion felt were not suitable for a mass-distributed medium. Examples were Elmer Gantry, Beloved Infidel, Psycho, and From The Terrace, among others.[29] Producer Richard Brooks favored limiting his Elmer Gantry to adults only, but the Legion felt that this film was in the B category nevertheless.[30]

As a result of this trend, in 1960 the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures came out with a major policy statement favoring classification of films by the Production Code Administration.[31]

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[28] Report, 1958, pp. 10-11.

[29] Report, 1960, p. 6.

[30] Giglio, op. cit., p. 243, n. 9.

[31] A Statement of the Roman Catholic Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television on the Present Motion Picture Industry - Its Product, Its Trends, Its Policies (New York: National Legion of Decency, November 30, 1960). (Mimeographed.)

The statement was prompted by the rise in objectionable films that "were *major Hollywood quality* productions reputedly oriented to adult audiences but *in fact* sold to impressionable youth."[32] The bishops excoriated the Production Code Administration:

> [The Industry] must desist from that hypocrisy and duplicity whereby it self-righteously hides from public censure behind a Code which is presently largely ineffective; which, pretensions to the contrary notwithstanding, *in fact* makes no reasonable provisions for the protection of youth.[33]

The bishops recall the Catholic stand against government interference in the film industry through state censorship and then propose a system of self-regulation, in keeping with the original purpose of the PCA, that would incorporate four points:

> 1. . . . [in order] to safeguard the young and impressionable from that subject matter and treatment in films which they are not yet mature enough to assimilate . . . [A] system of self-classification of films by the Industry cannot be lightly disregarded.
>
> 2. Although adult-oriented production is not only a legitimate but even a necessary maturation of the motion picture medium, such production must conform to the *spirit* of the Production Code. . . .
>
> 3. Through the cooperation of exhibitors with its Advertising Code Administration the Industry should effect a radical reformation of its excesses in exploiting films. Particularly reprehensible are not only many of the posters and ads but also the trailers ("coming attractions") shown in theatres. . . .
>
> 4. . . . [E]very exhibitor must limit his theatre programs to films which bear the Seal of Approval of the Production Code authority.[34]

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 3. (Italics added.)

It is noteworthy that, despite the strong language of this jeremiad, it is constructive insofar as it makes positive recommendations. It first of all admits, officially, that films should be adult-oriented. This is contrary to the philosophy of the old Code, which stressed the fact that films were for mass audiences and therefore had an obligation to offend or scandalize no one. It is for this reason that, secondly, the bishops do not call for adherence to the letter of the Code in such films. It seems that while attacking the PCA as negligent, the statement recognizes the impossibility of its fulfilling its obligations under the old "pass or fail" criteria for granting the Seal. As a matter of fact the PCA did reform along these lines in 1966.[35]

In the closing paragraph of this statement the bishops ask priests and educators to "convince the faithful [=Catholics] of the prudent necessity of consulting the Legion's classifications."[36] There is no fulmination against occasion of sin here. In their conclusion, the bishops state that anyone, young or old, who attends movies indiscriminately manifests "a pathetic disregard for good moral and artistic taste." The implication is that the Legion classifications are helpful aids to profitable film attendance, not negative danger signs against sin. This is in keeping with the trend of policy since 1957. Significant also is the coupling of "moral and artistic taste." Concern for artistic qualities, previously deliberately ignored by the Legion, was beginning to emerge as part of policy.[37]

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[35] Cf. pp.100 ff., infra.

[36] Ibid., p. 4.

A little over three months later, a fourth policy statement appeared when Bishop James A. McNulty, Chairman of the Episcopal Committee, published an article in America (March 11, 1961) entitled "The Spirit of the Legion of Decency." McNulty reaffirmed the earlier statement on classification and then went on to describe the "thinking that lies behind the formal phrases" of the pledge:

> There are about 200 pictures a year that can be seen without running the slightest danger of moral infection or indifferentism. There are, on the other hand, 75 films a year that are, to say the least, unworthy of viewing by anyone who professes Christian ideals of thought and conduct. Are you willing, then, freely to give up those 75 films, so that the Catholic body in the United Sates may present a solid front and proclaim with a concerted voice, as it were, that it will not be satisfied until the general moral tone of the films is worthy of the American people?[38]

McNulty stresses that it is Christian generosity, "not any sense of compulsion," that forms the driving force in the Legion's efforts to achieve a world of entertainment "wherein Catholics and all American citizens will not be morally assaulted or artistically debauched."[39] Once again, it is not merely occasions of sin that are of concern here, but a whole moral tone, one that is intimately bound up with the artistic. The following year, two of the most popular films, Lover, Come Back and That Touch of Mink were classified as B films by the Legion because each film surrounded illicit sex with "false glamour." The PCA had given a

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Bishop James A. McNulty, "The Spirit of the Legion of Decency," America, March 11, 1961, p. 757.

[39] Ibid., p. 758.

Seal to each film because no execution of illicit sex was actually shown.[40] In its report to the bishops, the Legion office pointed out that 36.93 per cent of all the films given a Code Seal in 1962 were classified as A-III, B, or Separately Classified by the Legion. These figures indicated that the PCA was in effect recommending for all what the Legion felt was appropriate for only some of the public or objectionable for all.[41]

On December 7, 1962, the Episcopal Committee issued another statement strongly urging the PCA the adopt a form of classification for all films granted the Seal. The arguments of the 1960 statement were repeated, but new elements were added. The bishops pointed out that no rating agency, including the Legion, was capable of rating all the films that were released on the public. Only the industry had the connections and manpower to do this. This time the bishops also stressed the fact that the type of classification they had urged and were continuing to support was both voluntary on the part of the industry, in keeping with the American tradition, and merely advisory for the public, to preserve the principle of individual freedom of choice. The stress of the entire statement was the right of parents to guide intelligently their children's choice of films, a right they could not exercise without an industry-supported classification system:

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[40] Report, 1962, pp. 18-19.

[41] Ibid.

> Some films are given such a lightning "saturation" booking across the country that the weekly and monthly reviews are a matter of only historical interest. Some theatres feature old or retitled films which are not the subject of current reviews. Short of a computer file on all films, parents are unable to determine the acceptability of many films exhibited in neighbourhood theatres which their children frequent. A free and well-ordered society should not place such a burden of research upon parents, but should provide them with a readily available service of guidance.[42]

By 1962 the Legion had moved quite far away from the notion that films were mass entertainment _per se_ and must therefore be suited to the mentality of a child. By insisting that the industry classify films for adults only and then give them the Seal, with such films as _Suddenly, Last Summer_ in mind, the Legion had come to accept a kind of film that would have been anathema to the old-pledge days of excoriating "filth" and a kind of film that was still anathema to the _letter_ of the Production Code, which forbade even the mention of perversion. It was also in 1962 that the Legion recommended for the first time a film not suitable for children (in their view): _The Miracle Worker_, the story of Helen Keller's early childhood and mental awakening through the dedication of teacher Annie Sullivan.[43] The film was rated A-II.

Whether it was a case of _post hoc_ or _propter hoc_ cannot be ascertained, but not long afterward, in the period from August 15, 1963 to August 13, 1964, the Legion rated only 51 films as family films--the smallest number of family films ever produced in a comparable period in the Legion's entire history. During the same time, the Legion condemned 16 films, the greatest number and highest percentage of condemned films in the Legion's history. None of these films was given a Code Seal of Approval by the PCA.[44]

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[42] _Advisory Film Classification: A Contemporary Obligation of Society_ (New York: National Legion of Decency, December 7, 1962), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

[43] _Report, 1962_, p. 22.

On December 3, 1964, the Episcopal Committee issued a policy statement that harked back to earlier days. After citing the statistics of rising numbers of objectionable films and waning production of family films, the statement infers:

> This trend and practice, coupled with the rejection of proposals for a voluntary classification system, reflect an avid desire for mass audiences and high profits, and a disregard for the spiritual and moral requirements of the spectators. . . . They [films] not only reflect culture, but also help to mould it. Repeated presentation of violence and vice can serve as an endorsement and popularization of such behaviour for the uncritical mass audience. . . . The value of a movie . . . must be judged by its impact on our culture; upon public and individual morality, and especially upon the spiritual and moral welfare of present and future generations of Americans.[45]

Like earlier pronouncements, this statement takes an alarmist view of the potential corrupting influence of allegedly immoral films. But, in keeping with the modern conception of a segmented and pluralistic film audience, rather than of the old idea of a homogeneous mass public, the statement condemns this trend in films only because it is coupled with the rejection of voluntary classification. It admits that many films need not be suitable for children:

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[44] Report, 1965, p. 16.

[45] "Statement of the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television on 'Moral Brinkmanship', December 4, 1964," Report, 1965, p. 17.

> Understandably, not every film made must be suitable for the young. However, it is not unreasonable to expect film artists and producers to devote some of their talent and resources to the production of a greater number of family films.[46]

The final policy statement for examination is a brief declaration by the Episcopal Committee that the Legion stands unalterably opposed to nudity in films. The statement was issued some months after The Pawnbroker was condemned because of a single scene in which a woman's breasts are fully exposed. The condemnation itself was, unprecedentedly, published after the film had been released and the critics had published their reviews:

> An acceptable classification has been denied this film for the sole reason that nudity has been used in its treatment. Although nudity in itself is not obscenity and might even have an artistic function in a film of quality, it is never a necessary or indispensable means to achieve dramatic effect. The present film is no exception because the director could have accomplished his artistic objectives by the less literal and more demanding method of indirection.
>
> The good of the motion picture industry as well as the national community requires that a marked effort on the part of some producers to introduce nudity into film treatment be discouraged, for such treatment is open to the gravest of abuse.[47]

The condemnation deliberately avoids any statement about the quality of the film, although it implies that the film is artistic. The condemnation is a radical departure from previous policy insofar as the C rating by no means indicates that the film could be an occasion of sin for anyone. It is the trend of possible future films that is condemned.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Report, 1965, p. 9.

The Pawnbroker was released in New York on April 20, 1965. The condemned rating was issued on May 11 and the Episcopal Committee made the following policy statement on June 9, 1965:

> For several years there has been definite evidence of an attempt, until now unsuccessful, on the part of some producers to introduce nudity into major American films.
>
> In itself nudity is not immoral and has long been recognized as a legitimate subject in painting and sculpture. However, in the very different medium of the motion picture it is never an artistic necessity. The long history of film production proves that dramatic and artistic effect has been achieved without recourse to nudity in motion picture treatment.
>
> The temptation for film-makers to exploit the prurient appeal of nudity in this mass medium is so great that any concession to its use, even for otherwise valid reasons of art, would lead to wide abuse.
>
> For this reason, the National Legion of Decency will continue to apply the policy of resisting every effort to employ nudity in film production. Though some may regard this policy as rigid and perhaps arbitrary, it is a policy which is in the best interests of the national community and of the motion picture industry itself.[48]

This statement merely amplifies the reasons given for the condemnation of The Pawnbroker, adding the authoritative weight of the bishops.

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[48] "Statement of the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television on the Subject of Nudity in Film Treatment, - June 9, 1965," Report, 1965, p. 18.

The condemnation of the film and the episcopal statement represent a significant turning point in the history of the Legion. It is the first time that a rating has explicitly been used in order to force a policy on the PCA, when there is no question of the rated film being immoral. It is the argument of positive charity and concern with moral _tone_ of films in general carried to the furthest extreme.

Since nudity was a violation of the old Code, _The Pawnbroker_ was at first denied a Seal of Approval. But the denial was appealed to the MPAA review board and subsequently the film was granted the Seal.[49]

The Legion's position on nudity in this film was ridiculed and attacked. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, the writer-director who won four Academy Awards for _Letter to Three Wives_ and _All About Eve_ stated that an organization that would condemn _The Pawnbroker_ rather than _The Carpetbaggers_ (a B film) cannot expect its standards or the reasons for its decisions to be taken seriously by adults. With regard to the fear of precedent-setting, he said: "And a Fellini or a Cacoyannis . . . /might want/ to do _Oedipus Rex_. He should, of course, But I'll be damned if that should set a precedent for a wave of quickie, tasteless tantalizers called 'My Son, My Lover' or 'Daddy Does it Best.'"[50]

Ephraim London, the attorney who won _The Miracle_ case and who also took _The Pawnbroker_ appeal to the MPAA review board, said that the latter film was a genuinely religious one, dealing with the moral problem of today--our responsibility for the suffering of others. "But the Legion of Decency says 'No, we'll ignore this and ignore the question of dramatic necessity and say we thought it should be done another way.' As if Msgr. Little [then Executive Secretary] is competent to tell any director what to do."[51]

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[49] Stone, _op. cit_., p. 52.

[50] _Ibid_., p. 53.

Worse than these harsh words for the Legion were the facts that The Pawnbroker won an Academy Award nomination for Rod Steiger and that the film was picked to represent the United States at the Berlin Film Festival for 1965. Furthermore, the RKO circuit, which had never before booked a C film, exhibited this one in both New York and California.[52]

One year later in August of 1966, The Pawnbroker was reclassified as A-III. The Legion had not backed down. The scene of nudity had been cut. The statement of reclassification noted that NCOMP (the Legion's name was changed on December 8, 1965) policy was against any reclassification after a film had been released nationally. An exception was made in this case because of The Pawnbroker's "extraordinary value."[53]

This film had violated the old Code and had been granted the Seal of Approval only as an exception on appeal. For the Legion, there could be no exceptions. Two years later Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? was denied the Seal because it violated the Code by reason of its profane language and blasphemous dialogue ('For Christ's sake,' 'son of a bitch,' etc.). NCOMP rated the film acceptable for adults, with reservations (A-IV). This was again a significant shift in policy: the first time a violator of the Code was approved by the Catholic office.

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[51] Ibid., p. 54.

[52] Ibid., p. 53.

[53] Films, 1966 (New York: National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, 1966), p. 52.

The published rating had this observation to offer:

> This film is a substantially faithful rendition of the well-known contemporary and controversial play by Edward Albee. In depicting the anguish and bitterness experienced by a married couple as they confront the illusions which have poisoned their life together, Ernest Lehman's production of Virginia Woolf dramatizes man's need to face the challenge of reality in order, by achieving self-knowledge, to build a capacity for love.
>
> In its presentation of this adult motion picture Warner Brothers has adopted the commendable policy that no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to a viewing of the film unless accompanied by his parent. Adults must also be advised that the theme of Virginia Woolf may prove confusing and its language offensive to the casual film-goer.[54]

There was an "overwhelming" amount of written and telephoned protest about this A-IV classification from conservative Catholics and others.[55] In response to this, NCOMP released a fuller amount of information on the process and reasons for the decision. Ninety-one NCOMP reviewers saw the film. Eighteen reviewers voted for C; 14 for B; 44 for

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[54] Ibid., p. 56.

[55] J. D. Nicola, Catholic Press Feature on Virginia Woolf (Bellerose, N. Y.: Catholic Press Features, July 6, 1966), p. 1.

A-IV; 9 for A-III. The other votes were split or undecided.[56]

NCOMP gave three reasons for its final rating. The first reason was that an A-IV rating was not a solid recommendation and did give notice that the film might offend some people. NCOMP explicitly stated that its function was "not to take over the role of individual conscience, but to offer moral guidance to assist the individual to make a personal, responsible decision."[57]

The second reason for the rating was that the obscene and blasphemous language used served a dramatic purpose and was not intended by the playwright as obscene or blasphemous in itself.

The third reason offered was really a defense against those who objected to the film. The fact that Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, the stars of the film, had recently made headlines due to their scandalous love affair, NCOMP stated, was not a point at issue with regard to the merits of the film in which they appear. NCOMP was following an old policy of the Legion to prescind from the private lives of actors in rating their vehicles, as they did in 1950 in their rating of Stromboli (A-II) which was directed by Roberto Rosselini and starred Ingrid Bergman, whose affair was the scandal of the year.[58]

NCOMP further stated that Warner Brothers had given a strong commitment to the policy of restricting the film to those over 18 unless accompanied by a parent. This commitment was a strong factor in the granting of an A-IV.[59]

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Report, 1950, p. 19.

The final section of the release reveals the "distillation" of the NCOMP reviewers thinking on the film. They felt that in the past it may have been justified to consider the films as fit only for "pure entertainment" but this was no longer true. Film can and should present serious adult drama because it has come of age as a medium and the film audience contains a large segment of discriminating and sensitive viewers. The psychological violence and strong language of the Albee play was as suited to the screen as the violence of Oedipus Rex was to the ancient Greek amphitheatre. "Violence has always been a literary device to suggest purification or redemption."[60]

Soon after Virginia Woolf, Alfie, a film which depends heavily on an abortion for its dramatic conflict, was released. This film also was rated A-IV. Abortion is a strictly taboo subject in the Code.[61]

Jack Valenti was installed as President of the MPAA on May 16, 1966 after Virginia Woolf was denied the Seal by the PCA on May 3, 1966. Because of the quality of the film and the restriction to adults that Warner Brothers had imposed on exhibitors at the insistence of NCOMP, the MPAA review board granted the film the Seal as an exception on May 17, 1966.[62] When *Alfie* was released, Valenti decreed that there could be no exceptions to the Code; therefore the Code must be changed. Shurlock notes that the ratings of the Legion on these two films were a help in breaking the old Code. The Legion, now NCOMP, had come full circle in its relationship with the PCA and the MPAA.

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[59] Nicola, op. cit., p. 2.

[60] Ibid.

[61] The original Code does not mention abortion. The 1956 amended Code, however, states: "Abortion shall never be shown explicitly or by inference, and a story must not indicate that an abortion has been performed." (Particular Applications 3, 4.). The 1956 version of the Production Code is reprinted in Murray Schumach, The Face on the Cutting Room Floor (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1964), pp. 279-92.

Martin Quigley, Jr., son and editorial heir of Quigley, Sr., on the *Motion Picture Daily* wrote these lines in his editorial column apropos of the *Virginia Woolf* "exception" and the need for Code revision: "If the Code system is not worth preserving, let's give it a quick burial."[63]

On September 20, 1966, the MPAA announced its unanimous adoption of a new Production Code, drafted by Jack Valenti and Louis Nizer, general counsel for the MPAA. It was shorter, devoid of captious detail, and incorporated classification. Since the word, 'classification,' was long anathema to the MPAA, it was not used.[64] The MPAA press release on the new Code put it this way:

> The most significant innovation in the new regulations which the industry imposes on itself is to extend the commitment by the producers and film distributors to make more information about films available to parents, the arbiters of family conduct, so they can choose which motion pictures their children can see.

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[62] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

[63] *Motion Picture Daily*, June 15, 1966, p. 3.

[64] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

> The new Code establishes procedures whereby producers, in cooperation with the Code Administrator, will identify certain pictures as "Suggested for mature audiences" in all advertising, displays at theatres, and by other means.[65]

This language about the rights of parents recalls the Legion demands for classification in 1960 and 1962.

The new Code does not explicitly forbid nudity. It states: "Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented."

In place of the preamble and underlying principles of the old Code, the new version simply says its "objectives" are:

> 1. To encourage artistic expression by expanding creative freedom; and
>
> 2. To assure that the freedom which encourages the artist remains responsible and sensitive to the standards of the larger society.[66]

Instead of the dozens of detailed prescriptions of the old Code, the new version lists only eleven "standards":

> The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld. Restraint shall be exercised in portraying the taking of life.
>
> Evil, sin, crime and wrong-doing shall not be justified.
>
> Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or anti-social activities in which minors participate or are involved.
>
> Detailed and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture and abuse shall not be presented.

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[65] Press release, Motion Picture Association of America, September 20, 1966, pp. 2-3.

[66] The Motion Picture Code of Self-Regulation (New York: Motion Picture Association of America, 1966), p. 2.

> Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.
>
> Illicit sex relationships shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed.
>
> Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sex aberrations.
>
> Obscene speech, gestures or movements shall not be presented. Undue profanity shall not be permitted.
>
> Religion shall not be demeaned.
>
> Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious or national groups, shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.
>
> Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.[67]

For the first time, non-members of the MPAA are invited to submit their films to the PCA for a Seal of Approval.[68] The significance of this move is that it widens the area of films that can be classified in the hope that "Suggested for mature audiences" can be uniformly applied.

The liberalizing of the standards of the Code only made legal what had been the practice of the PCA for years, with the exception of blasphemous language and abortion.[69] It was the introduction of classification that was a real departure from the past.

A week after the adoption of the new Code, Archbishop John J. Krol, then chairman of the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, stated:

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[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[69] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

> We applaud this step which MPAA has now taken. We share MPAA's manifest interest in artistic excellence, realizing, too, that mature audiences must not be bound to a level of entertainment fit (from a moral point of view) only for children. We reiterate our distaste for censorship. We reaffirm our dedication to the Bill of Rights, no part of which is more important to the American people than that freedom of utterance which includes artistic expression.
>
> Without rancour, however, we recall that other declarations have been made and as quickly forgotten by those who spoke them. And we must point out that the 1956 Motion Picture Production Code has been circumvented, ignored, qualified and very often honored more in the breach than the observance. . . . We appeal to the public to support the industry in its present good intentions and to parents, in the exercise of their parental duties, to cooperate with local theatres to give voluntary advisory classification a real chance to work.[70]

Geoffrey Shurlock, who has favored classification since 1956, puts the case more succinctly: "Everybody is concerned about children and yet nobody wants to restrict valid artistic themes. So why punish everybody?"[71]

The present attitude of the NCOMP Executive Secretary reflects the thinking of the recent pronouncements of the Episcopal Committee and of the revised Code. There is no question about pornography, Fr. Sullivan stated, being clearly a violation of producers', distributors', and exhibitors' moral responsibility, since truly pornographic films are just not shown by reputable members of the industry. The question, he feels, is not so much of responsible treatment of a subject as it is of the manner of selling a film to the public. If the producers claim it is an adult film, then it should be advertised in an adult manner, without sensation, and restricted from minors without parental consent. This procedure would even be true for C films. Blow Up was a C film, but it was condemned because of the "technical reason of nudity," not because it was an "obviously salacious movie" as some C films are. Even a Catholic exhibitor, Fr. Sullivan admitted, could show this film in a morally responsible way, if he restricted it to mature audiences and did not advertise it sensationally.[72]

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[70] Report, 1966, p. 23.

[71] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

Fr. Sullivan indicated that the advertising that accompanies the distribution of a film can be a gauge of the producer's intentions. This opinion parallels the majority decision of the Supreme Court against Ralph Ginsburg on March 21, 1966. Speaking for the majority, Justice Brennan declared:

> /The advertising for Eros and Liaison/ highlighted the gloss petitioners put on the publications, eliminating any doubt what the purchaser was being asked to buy.
>
> This evidence, in our view, was relevant in determining the ultimate question of "obscenity" and, in the context of this record, serves to resolve all ambiguity and doubt.[73]

Unlike the courts and their dealing with printed matter after publication and advertising, however, NCOMP rates films before they are released and therefore frequently before advertising for them is published. This indicator can not be used by NCOMP in rating a film. Besides, according to Fr. Sullivan, the film is always rated on its own merits.[74]

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[72] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[73] The New York Times, March 22, 1966, p. 24.

Fr. Sullivan was asked if he considered exploitation and lack of moral responsibility to be confined to the area of salaciousness. What about escapist or sentimental films with Polyanna plots and maudlin settings? Fr. Sullivan felt that there were two kinds of escapism and that only one was reprehensible. The first is the frankly unrealistic film, which makes no pretense to reflect real life but merely to entertain with melodrama or suspense. This is no problem. The second type over-sentamentalizes real-life problems with phony or pat solutions. This second type can also be harmless if cloying, but with no moral danger that NCOMP need warn against. Yet, such films can also be misleading, and this the office is concerned about. Fr. Sullivan cited the Doris Day-type film "where on the surface it would seem that virtue always triumphs because the professional virgin, in spite of the compromising and dangerous positions in which she is placed, cleverly emerges pure and spotless. This is fraudulent."[75]

Honesty and authenticity within the limits of the genre of a film form the basis of NCOMP ratings, according to Fr. Sullivan. There is no devious effort, he claimed, to impose on the film medium any

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[74] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[75] *Ibid*.

Catholic rules for either subject matter or treatment. The principal concern of NCOMP is:

> Not that the film artist is expected to be a successor of the Apostles and be formally religious--whatever the religion--in his approach to a human problem. We feel that the film artist, like any artist, should be authentic and honest in the vision of man he suggests by the drama of his characters' actions and motivations. An authentic vision of man is not exclusively Catholic or even exclusively religious. We are therefore committed to the principle that Christian criticism of films can keep the door closed to exploiters of film but open for authentic artists. It is dishonesty in theme and salacious pandering in treatment that our ratings try to discourage. Light escapism, fantasy, melodrama and suspense have their place and we don't oppose them as such. But we also wish to encourage serious films, like _A Man For All Seasons_, and _Darling_, which was hard-hitting and touched all the bases--the seven deadly sins. We awarded both these films and promoted them through the _Catholic Film Newsletter_.[76]

This most recent statement by Fr. Sullivan is a far cry from the earlier pronouncements of Archbishop McNicholas. It is the tone and rhetoric which accounts for the change. For McNicholas, immorality was identified with the un-Christian. "Pernicious philosophy" was the rhetoric of the period for today's "lack of artistic honesty." If pressed, Msgr. McClafferty would have been willing to admit that a given individual could see a B or C film without harm--as the language of his Report in 1940 implies: "[Some films are occasions of sin] for the _average_ spectator or _certain categories_ of persons."[77]

The change in policy is one not of substance but attitude. This change of attitude, however, is no small thing. It is the difference between fearful and calm judgment.

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[76] _Ibid_.

[77] _Report, 1940_, p. 60. (Italics added.)

Source of Policy

The Papacy

The first annual report of the Legion of Decency, issued on November 14, 1936, opens with two pages that give excerpts from the Encyclical of Pius XI, Vigilanti Cura, published at Rome on June 29th and released in the United States on July 2nd of that year.[78]

Vigilanti Cura is addressed to the American hierarchy in particular and the rest of the hierarchy in the world in general. It is about film and its power for good and evil and the role of the Church in promoting the good and checking the evil. The two excerpts quoted by the Legion report deal with preventing the evil and incidentally are two of the passages of the encyclical that praise the American hierarchy, to whom the report is addressed.

> It was most fitting and desirable that you, Venerable Brethren [=American bishops], should have exercised a special watchfulness over the motion picture industry which your country so highly developed and which is a great influence in other quarters of the globe. It is equally the duty of Bishops of the entire Catholic world to unite in vigilance over this universal and potent form of entertainment and instruction, to the end that they may be able to place a ban on bad motion pictures because they are an offense to moral and religious sentiment, and because they are in opposition to the Christian spirit and to its ethical principles.

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[78] Report, 1936, pp. 1-2.

> There must be no weariness in combating whatever contributes to lessening the people's sense of decency and honor.[79]

The second passage deals with the organization of the national Catholic offices which the Pope hopes to see set up in each country in the world where films are shown on a large scale. It is merely a description of the Legion organization in the United States, the model for the world. Important in this statement is a reference to classification: ". . . [The office should publish a list] by which people will be made clearly aware of which films are permitted to all, which are permitted with reservations and which are harmful or positively bad."[80]

Since the Legion classifications at that time were only four: for all, for adults only, objectionable in part, and condemned, presumably Msgr. McClafferty and the bishops considered this a description of their rating system--a reasonable assumption in view of the frequent praise given the Legion in the encyclical. Later, the same passage would be used to justify changes in the rating system, especially the use of Separate Classification and the more recent A-IV.[81]

In this encyclical, Pius XI voiced the same concern that the bishops and the Production Code had earlier evidenced. He hoped that films would improve by avoiding excessive betrayal of crime and vice, by not approving of sin, by not presenting to "impressionable youth" false ideals of life, and especially by not presenting "picture plays calculated to inflame passions and arouse lower instincts latent in the human heart."[82]

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[79] Pope Pius XI, Vigilanti Cura: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1936), p. 11.

[80] Ibid., p. 15.

[81] The National Legion of Decency: Thirty Years of Christian Witness (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1964), p. 6.

But the Pope gives almost equal space to the positive values of the cinema, its power to educate and broaden, promote social justice and international understanding, present heroic ideals in biographies of great men of science and learning and history.[83] The Pope also approved of the censorship and classification systems set up by "certain governments."[84] These passages were ignored by the Legion at the time and they have never had any influence on Legion policy, although similar passages in later Papal statements, as will be seen, were used over twenty years later when the Legion began to do some positive work in the film world.

In 1943, Msgr. McClafferty suggested to the bishops that they set up another office that would engage in serious film research and issue scholarly evaluations of films. He did not get the idea from the Pope, but from Martin Quigley, Sr. The idea was rejected.[85]

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[82] Pope Pius XI, op. cit., pp. 5-7.

[83] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[84] Ibid., p. 11.

[85] Report, 1943, pp. 103 ff.

Vigilanti Cura had no formative influence on the Legion. It was issued as a result of the Legion's formation. After its issuance, it was used as a Papal blessing of approval for the work of the Legion and the policy that was already formulated through the Code.

In the years that followed until the 1957 promulgation of Pius XII's Encyclical *Miranda Prorsus*, the only papal statements on film, outside of *ad hoc* addresses to special visiting groups in the Vatican, were *pro forma* letters sent to annual congresses of the Office Catholique International du Cinema. These letters were sent by some official of the Vatican in the Pope's name, and were addressed to all the national offices, among which the American Legion of Decency was the most prominent.

The congress for 1954 was held in Cologne, West Germany on the subject of film classification. The papal letter sent to this meeting was considered by Msgr. Little, then Executive Secretary of the Legion and Vice President of the OCIC, as the most important papal statement since *Vigilanti Cura.*[86] The reason for Little's concern was twofold: The letter, in place of the usual approbatory generalizations, was critical. Secondly, the Pontifical Commission, established since 1951 for motion pictures, had sent an observer to the last meeting. What commanding role this office might assume was uncertain.

The letter was sent on June 10, 1954, a week before the meeting opened on June 17. It was signed by the Vatican Pro-secretary of State, J. B. Montini, who would become, almost ten years later, Pope Paul VI:

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[86] *Report, 1954*, p. 78.

> [Film] classification is at once a work of preservation and of education of the faithful; its primary aim is to give an objective judgment on the moral value of the film itself. Just as it is desirable that a product morally recommendable should be of real value technically, so too, on the other hand, must one in equal measure guard against all weakness toward a film which might be recommended by its technical value or the interest of its subject matter, but which would call for grave reservations from the moral or the religious viewpoint. Possibly the judging Commissions [=Legion and other national rating groups] should sometimes be warned against that temptation.[87]

Through the diplomatic language of Montini there was a definite charge that the ratings of offices were too lax on a film if it were a well-mounted production. The letter goes on to voice misgivings about the different categories for different levels of maturity in the audience. The problem here, Montini felt, is that the theatres admit anyone who can pay the price and therefore even if a film would be permissible for some, others who might be harmed would be exposed to it. What about the common good? In order to influence public opinion against this dangerous type of film, perhaps all ought to be advised to stay away from them.[88]

When the observer from the Pontifical Commission showed up in Cologne, he was asked to amplify on the meaning of the letter. The observer, Executive Secretary of the Commission, Msgr. Albino Galletto, introduced his remarks with the saving declaration that what he had to say was strictly his personal opinion. He did not answer the question.

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[87] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

He merely repeated the fact that the OCIC was a Catholic organization, that it owed obedience to papal directives, and that the faithful had an obligation to follow the ratings of the national offices. Somebody else would have to define the extent and nature of this obligation; he was not going to say anything further on the matter.[89]

The following year the Legion rated 110 films B whereas in 1954 there were only 78 films rated B. Whether this was because the films were more morally offensive in 1955 or because the Legion had become stricter is impossible to determine. This is the only even remotely possible result of Montini's letter on Legion policy or activity.

The subsequent papal statements have been referred to publicly by the Legion and NCOMP a number of times and copies of them have been distributed by the office. The first two documents are two separate addresses Pius XII gave in Rome in 1955, the first to representatives of the Italian film industry on June 21 and the second to a delegation from the congress of the International Union of Theatre Owners and Film Distributors on October 28. Both addresses were printed in one booklet by the Legion and entitled _The Ideal Film_. The third and final document was also by Pius XII. It was his encyclical _Miranda Prorsus_ of 1957.

Since Msgr. Little and Fr. Sullivan often refer to these documents _in globo_ as containing the Church's position with regard to motion pictures and the mass media, they require special attention.[90]

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[89] _Ibid_., p. 81.

In his address to the Italian film industry, Pius is very laudatory of their artistic accomplishments, and of the power of film in general to entertain, to instruct, to inspire.[91] The Pope's main point in this address is based precisely on this power of the film, which he feels is almost overwhelming. For the Pope, the films are a kind of enchantment and the "viewer moves in the actor's world as though it were his own. He even to some degree lives in his place and almost within him, in perfect harmony of feeling, sometimes even being drawn by the action to suggest words and phrases."[92]

This enchantment can have a good or bad moral effect:

> In fact, the internal dynamisms of the spectator's ego in the depths of his nature, of his subconscious and unconscious, can lead him thus to the realm of light of the noble /sic/ and beautiful, just as they can bring him under the sway of darkness and depravity, at the mercy of powerful and uncontrolled instincts, depending on whether the picture plays up and arouses the qualities of one or the other camp and focuses on it the attention, the desires and psychological impulses. Human nature's condition is such, in fact, that not always do the spectators possess or preserve the spiritual energy, the interior detachment and frequently, too, the strength of will to resist a captivating suggestion and thus the capacity to control and direct themselves.[93]

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[90] Little, op. cit., p. 744. Cf. also The National Legion of Decency: Thirty Years of Christian Witness, op. cit., passim.

[91] Pope Pius XII, The Ideal Film (New York: The National Legion of Decency, 1955), pp. 3-6.

[92] Ibid., p. 6.

[93] Ibid., p. 7.

As in his predecessor's Vigilanti Cura, the Pope feels that public intervention, governmental censorship, is justified to check "the most dangerous influences" of the film industry.[94] However, this address was expressly directed to the Italian film industry, whose governmental process is not the same as our own.[95]

Pius XII then goes on to give his views of the factors that must be considered in making the "ideal film." By this is meant not the ultimately perfect individual film. It rather refers to the idealistic principles which should inform the process of making a good film, worthy of the industry and the public.[96] The Pope sees these principles deriving from three aspects involved in the film world: the rights and expectations of the spectator, the subject matter and content of any given film, and the rights and needs of the community in which the film industry operates.[97]

To meet the rights of the spectator, the film must present a picture of man that is hopeful and that shows the resources of the human spirit to overcome evil. This does not mean that evil and tragedy can not be presented, even as partially attractive and appealing. But evil cannot be seen as ultimately triumphant. Evil is understood in its widest sense, as both the evil that men do to themselves and others and the evil that befalls them from circumstances. The film, in a word, must be honest and "tell it like it is," as the current pop cliche would have it. But the objective reality of the world, for the Pope, is the Christian reality of man fallen, and continually failing, but at the same time redeemed, with both the seeds and actual deeds of goodness, even heroism, within his grasp. The Pope is not maintaining that all films be moral fables. He recognizes that films provide for most people a relief from just plain boredom, and many, if not most, films may be superficial daydreams. There is no harm in that, if the daydream makes no pretensions to being a philosophy of life.[98]

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[94] Ibid., p. 8.

[95] The Italian government classifies films, as do the governments of Great Britain, France, and West Germany. Cf. Giglio, op. cit., p. 240, and Schumach, op. cit., pp. 275-78.

[96] Pope Pius XII, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

[97] Ibid., p. 10.

The Pope did not develop the other two factors until his next address on October 28. Here he quickly gets to these remaining points: the content and subject matter of film, and the relationship that should exist between the film industry and the community.

The Pope believed that every film should measure up "to the original and essential demands of man himself: . . . truth, goodness and beauty."[99] Educational films, "perhaps out of regard for the varying background of the public," are forced to be somewhat superficial and cannot pretend to give viewers a deep understanding of a subject. But they do accomplish the worthwhile objective of creating sympathy for the subject and "the emotion of wonder."[100] Films about other countries also help create an atmosphere of mutual understanding.[101]

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[98] _Ibid_., pp. 11-13.

[99] _Ibid_., p. 18.

[100] _Ibid_., pp. 19-20.

The most common films, of course, are commercial dramatic productions. Since drama depends on conflict, evil has to be shown. But it can never be merely "an object for spectacle and amusement."[102] Evil should not be shown "whenever evil and perversity are presented for their own sakes; if the wrongdoing represented is at least in fact, approved; if it is shown in corrupting, stimulating, or insidious ways."[103] Evil may be shown "when the struggle with evil, and even its temporary victory, serves in relation to the whole to a deeper understanding of life and its proper ordering, of self-control, of enlightenment and strengthening of judgment and action."[104]

Religious dimensions in human life require even greater tact, since religion is an interior reality whose outer trappings, inadequate symbols that they are, are the only aspect of religion that can be captured on film. The Pope further notes that the great majority of men do believe in God, or at least a god. So many films act as if men never gave God a thought. This should be corrected.[105]

The Pope looks upon the community as made up of three levels: family, state, and Church. His point here is that films should be respectful in their treatment of all three levels, without irresponsible satire that would weaken the value of any of the three in the eyes of the audience. He does not mean that faults cannot be pointed out.[106]

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[101] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Both addresses share much in common with the Production Code of 1934. Both Pope and Code consider films as powerful advocates for a point of view that can do much good or much evil. Both are concerned that the established order be not too strongly attacked by the film, which has such appeal for the masses. The difference is in the Pope's concern that films elevate and recreate the viewer and the Code's relative, but perfectly understandable, silence on the positive values of the film, aside from entertainment.

Miranda Prorsus deals with broadcasting and television as well as motion pictures. It broadens the general statements made about films in Vigilanti Cura and The Ideal Film to include these other media. The following comments have been confined to the section of the document that deals with motion pictures.

The encyclical repeats Vigilanti Cura's stress on the importance of the national offices and puts special emphasis on film classification. If anything, Pius XII is more strict about rigid standards being applied in classifying films which cannot be "opposed to human dignity, to the modesty of home surroundings, to holiness of life, to the Church of Jesus Christ [=Roman Catholic Church], to human and civil types of association."[107] Reminiscent of Montini's letter in the Pope's name to the OCIC, the encyclical scores the "excessive indulgence" exhibited by some national film offices which issue acceptable ratings to films which are technically brilliant but nevertheless "offend right morals." This indulgence is also found even when films are rated acceptable which "though they appear on the surface to conform to moral laws, yet contain something which is contrary to the Catholic faith."[108]

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[106] Ibid., pp. 27-32.

Going beyond previous papal statements, Miranda Prorsus distributes special obligations to various professions and occupations connected with the industry. Catholic film critics are wrong if they do not "instruct their readers on the moral position to be adopted" toward a specific film under review.[109] Theatre owners and distributors are "forbidden in conscience" to present films which are "contrary to the [Catholic] Faith and sound morals, or to enter into contracts by which they are forced to present shows of this kind."[110] Actors cannot participate in immoral films. In addition, film stars have a special obligation to set a good example by their private lives.[111] Catholic film directors and producers should "master the Gospel teaching and make themselves familiar with the Church's traditional doctrine on the certainties of life, on happiness and virtue, on sorrow and sin, on body and soul, on social problems and human desires." This study will not only insure the moral integrity of the films they produce but will also inspire them with a "fresh enthusiasm to produce works of lasting value."[112]

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[107] Pope Pius XII, Miranda Prorsus: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1957), p. 20.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., p. 21.

[110] Ibid., p. 22.

[111] Ibid., p. 23.

The final sentence of the section on motion pictures urges "all good and prudent men" to make sure that "the applause and approval of the general public will not be wanting as a prize for really worthwhile films."[113]

A few months later, the American bishops issued their statement on censorship and the Legion of Decency. Not one reference, as was noted above, was made to this encyclical. The Legion began to recommend films two years later, in 1959, shortly after Fr. Sullivan attended the Fund for the Republic Seminar on religion and the free society.

Since Miranda Prorsus, NCOMP classifications have not been more rigid; they have become more flexible with the introduction of A-III and A-IV categories. NCOMP has explicitly refrained from injecting Catholic dogma into its ratings and has sought to broaden its work into the artistic aspects of the cinema. Thus despite statements to the contrary, the effect of Miranda Prorsus on Legion policy seems to this researcher to have been null.

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[112] Ibid., p. 25.

[113] Ibid., p. 26.

The same cannot be said of The Ideal Film. According to Fr. Sullivan, the NCOMP criteria are based on the honesty of a film in being true to human life. This was a main point of The Ideal Film.

The Second Vatican Council

One of the many decrees of Vatican II was the Decree on Social Communications. The document deals with the gamut of mass media, films, broadcasting, and print. There are no new specific statements in this decree beyond what has already been said with regard to films. The difference is one of tone. The same worries about the evil effects of immoral films arepresent,[114] the same concern that films be used to elevate and enlighten,[115] the same endorsement of national offices.[116] In this endorsement the offices are considered as "guides for consciences." There is no promotion of things Catholic for the trade in general, rather it is a general concern that all the media be used in a responsible and free way. There is definitely a parochial preoccupation for the religious use of the media by the Catholic Church, but this is seen as one of many possible good uses.[117] On the whole the document is unbrilliant in expression and unimaginative in construction.[118]

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[114] "Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication," The Documents of Vatican II (New York: America Press, 1966), pp. 319-33, I.B. 4. /References to this decree are by sections and paragraph numbers./

[115] Ibid., I.C. 11.

[116] Ibid., II.D. 21.

[117] Ibid., II. 13.

[118] Cf. comments on this decree by Thomas J. M. Burke, S.J., and Dr. Stanley I. Stuber, The Documents of Vatican II, op. cit., pp. 318-332.

Yet it is not ecumenically offensive, as parts of Miranda Prorsus, with its insistence on the protection and promotion of the Faith, certainly are.

This decree had no effect on NCOMP, but the Council itself did.[119] The Council opened up doors to other churches and began the present Catholic trend away from "triumphalism," that unChristian hubris of Romanism which affected the entire Catholic Church. "Triumphalism" refers to a complex of characteristics, from ostentatious ceremonial to condescending moral judgments on the non-Catholic world to refusal to admit mistakes on the part of the institutional Church. The old Legion, with its certainty of righteousness and fear of attacks on the status quo, was part of that "triumphalism." The Legion rated films but did not criticize itself or its policies in public any more than General Motors would. NCOMP, like the post-counciliar Church, has been groping away from "triumphalism." It has awarded films in conjunction with the National Council of Churches. It has been willing to listen to Richard Schickle, Life and freelance film critic, to Bosley Crowther of The Times, among others, at a seminar on moral criteria for films held jointly with the Broadcast and Film Commission on September 24, 1967. Vatican II has had a profound effect on the attitude and atmosphere in which NCOMP moves. More and more, film study is being emphasized with the increasing role of the Center for Film Study.[120]

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[119] Little, op. cit., p. 744.

[120] Cf. Appendix B.

Office Catholique International du Cinema (OCIC)

Since the Second World War, the Executive Secretary has attended the annual congresses of the OCIC. The congresses, like most conventions, consist of two parts: business meetings on administrative details, financing, etc., and policy discussions at which position papers are read. In all the voluminous records and papers of all these meetings, there is nothing that can be said to have an effect on Legion or NCOMP policy except for the ratified position paper approved by all members at the 1964 congress in Venice. This paper consists of a summation of numbered statements which are the foundation of the moral classification practiced by all the National offices. It is the only document extant that spells out the thinking behind the moral classifications used by NCOMP and it is not available for publication. Because of both its importance and unavailability it is here reproduced in full: (N.O. refers to national offices. Read NCOMP.) This copy was obtained in Berlin in July of 1967 and is dated October 3, 1965, after revisions had been made through correspondence.

Moral Classification of Films

(OCIC, Venice 1964)

I. BASIC ELEMENTS

1. Both as the creation of the artist and as an article of consumption for the spectator, the film belongs essentially to the moral order.

2. The objective moral value of a film is derived from two fundamental sources: the object represented (image and action) and the way in which it is represented (interpretation given to the object, message, thesis); to which we should add the many circumstances surrounding cinema communication, which give it its peculiar meaning: community and social character, extraordinary persuasive value of the moving audio-visual expression.

3. The moral value of the spectator's act is derived from the three following considerations: the good or the evil effect that seeing the film in question is supposed to produce on the spectator himself; the good or bad example he sets his neighbour by going to see this film; the material contribution he makes to the career of the film by patronizing it, thus encouraging the production of other works of the same kind.

4. The spectator is conscience bound to choose the films he patronizes in such a way

   that he avoids what may endanger his moral integrity, and profits on the other hand from the positive values contained in the film; that he avoids scandal, and on the contrary sets a good example to those around him;

   that he refuses to patronize bad films, and on the contrary promotes the success of good films.

5. As in the case of any other human act, in concrete reality it is the duly formed and enlightened conscience of each individual that is the ultimate judge whether he may patronize a given film or not, and each spectator is in the last analysis responsible for his acts to God. It is, therefore, all the more obligatory for him to form his conscience and enlighten it through knowledge of the objective facts, including in particular the moral appreciations of films published by the organs that have received a mandate from the Church for this purpose.

6. The general purpose of the moral classification of films given by the National Offices is to help the individual to choose his films in conformity with his moral duty. Intended for the average spectator and consequently necessarily schematic, it does not suppress the role of conscience nor the final responsibility of the individual.

7. The secondary purposes of the moral classification of films is
   - to form the conscience both of spectators and of all those who take part, in any way, in the making and diffusion of films;

- to make spectators aware of the positive and negative values of the films they see, helping them to benefit more from the former and warning them against the latter;

- to encourage the production of good films, through the support given to their commercial success, and to dissuade people from making bad films.

8. The work of film classification is indispensable and is at once the duty and the indefeasible prerogative of each N.O. (Vig. Cura, Mir. Prorsus, OCIC Cologne 1954 etc.). It must be carried out by a special organism, in the framework of the N.O. but independent in its judgments, comprising priests and laymen, men and women of different ages and social standing, single and married people (OCIC Montreal 1962), under the guidance of a priest who has been given a mandate (Montini Letter to OCIC, Cologne/OCIC Montreal). Each country must make its own classification, which will be the same for the whole country, except that it may be applied more severely in certain localities, if necessary.

9. The general and habitual criterion of moral Classification will be the good or bad influence the film is supposed to have on the average spectator in public cinemas. This influence depends on the objective content of the film, its conformity with Catholic doctrine and morality, the circumstances of its presentation and the specific way of action of the audio-visual media. In certain cases, however, the social aspect of the cinematographic phenomenon may justify greater severity than this general criterion would entail, in order to correct an error publicly or to manifest particularly strong reprobation.

10. As it is not permissible to act with a conscience in doubt as to the moral value of a given act, it is the duty of the spectator to inquire beforehand regarding the morality of the film he is thinking of seeing. This duty of prudence is confirmed and reinforced by numerous ecclesiastical documents. (Montini Letter to OCIC, Cologne/ Mir. Prorsus.)

11. The judgments expressed by the N.O.'s are not, as such, ecclesiastical laws; except for the express contrary indication by the Hierarchy, they do not create, for spectators, a real and proper obligation of obedience, an obligation of positive law in addition to the obligation of natural dealt with in paragraph 3. They are, however, particularly valid pronouncements by reason of the competence of the Commission that publishes them and of the explicit mandate it has received from the Hierarchy. To ignore the duly established moral classification is, therefore, a moral fault of imprudence for the faithful, unless there is a proportionate excuse. The gravity of this fault depends on the gravity and proximity of the danger to which the spectator knowingly exposes himself.

12. There is no reason to aim at identical classification of all films in the different countries. It is advisable, however, that the N.O.'s

- should try to reach agreement on the number, the denomination and the meaning of the categories used;
- should endeavour to define, through an exchange of studies and experiences the basic criteria they have in common;
- should thus gradually succeed in avoiding, in the classification of the same films, divergencies not justified by national characteristics.

II. ADAPTATION TO A NEW SITUATION

13. The general evolution of ideas, the diffusion of a certain cinema culture and the increasing awareness of the faithful regarding their duties in connection with the cinema--a maturity to which the work of moral classification of films has certainly contributed--seem to justify in general and in the case of adult spectators, concentration upon the general impression, the final impression made by a film, the spirit that animates it and the message it diffuses, rather than upon details; there are some details, however, that can modify the moral value of a whole film, even when they are not an essential part of the work, and which, therefore, should be judged inadmissible in a film of a specific category.

14. It would be dangerous to under-estimate the value of details when judging whether a film is suitable for children and adolescents, especially as regards suggestive visual elements and scenes of violence. Children under 10 years of age are, in fact, generally unable to view a thing as a whole, and even adolescents are still very sensitive to details. As a result of the time lag between physiological puberty and "mental puberty" today--the former often coming earlier, while the latter comes later--many young people today suffer from a lack of balance and an impressionability which it would be dangerous not to take into account.

15. Certain elements of superior interest, such as the cultural, scientific, artistic value of a film may hold the attention of the cultured spectator and thus make him less vulnerable to the negative elements in the work. It seems justified to take this into account at a time when general culture is spreading to more and more extensive classes of the population, on condition, however, that they are genuine cultural values and do not serve only as a

pretext for the presentation of questionable elements. Sometimes, too, instead of attenuating its harmfulness, the formal perfection of a film makes it, on the contrary, more dangerous; this may easily happen in the case of propaganda films extolling wrong conceptions.

16. It is generally advisable to indicate frankly and clearly the reasons motivating the classification of a film, thus treating the spectator as an adult. When doing so, care should be taken, however, to formulate them with great tactfulness, keeping in mind above all the young people who might read the appreciation. When the objections to be made to a film concern sensual images, particular prudence is necessary lest the details supplied should increase the appeal of the film for a certain public.

17. For psychological reasons, it is advisable to limit the use of initials (letters or figures) by the N.O. and to use the explicit titles of the different categories for national and international diffusion of the classification, e.g., "admissible for all," "for adults," etc.

18. It is generally advisable to lay more stress on the qualities of good films than on the defects of bad ones, both in the moral appreciation properly speaking and in extra information of a technical and artistic nature. This corresponds to the thoroughly positive attitude of the Church towards the 7th Art and the work of film appreciation will thus contribute to the promotion of deserving works. Care should be taken, however, to avoid an over-indulgent attitude, which ends up by encouraging mediocrity.

III. SPECIAL PUBLICS

19. Since the moral classification is made with a view to the probable effect of the films on the average cinema-going public, when it is applied, it is advisable to take into account within certain limits particular conditions of receptivity in the case of certain special publics, such e.g. as

    - spectators with a high intellectual and cultural level as well as a doctrinal and moral formation clearly above that of the average cinema-goer;
    - cinema enthusiasts with real film culture;
    - Participants in special meetings, where the presentation and discussion of the film direct interest towards its genuine values and offer the opportunity of correcting the impression produced by its negative elements.

A more liberal interpretation of the classification, in the case of these special publics, can, however, be applied only to films in which the dangerous elements are of an ideological nature and not of an erotic and sensual nature. It is not intellectual or cultural formation that immunizes the spectator against the latter kind of danger, but only his spiritual maturity and his moral strength.

20. As for the problem of how to take these special publics into account in the establishment and diffusion of classifications:

- it is impossible to make separate classifications for them;
- one possibility (at least for internal use) would be to add a special sign indicating that the severe rating was attributed for reasons that are less cogent in the case of special publics.
- the best solution, however, seems to consist in reminding this kind of public that the negative classifications are not a formal prohibition (red light in road traffic), but a warning (intermittent orange light) intended to arouse the conscience which is ultimately the final judge. In the case of special showings, the person in charge should guide consciences and interpret and apply the classification in such a way as to safeguard the authority of the classification committee, the moral integrity of members and the educational aims of the showings as well.

21. In any case, even the highly cultured spectator or group of spectators who sincerely believe that they are not exposed to the moral danger of a given film, should

- consult the moral appreciation of the film and study the reasons that motivated it; this enlightened obedience to what the Church asks will permit them to make their decision with full knowledge of the case and will put them in a stronger position of defence with regard to the negative elements of the film.
- to throw into the scales of their decision their duty to avoid--except for a good reason--both scandal and material support for an unhealthy film.

22. Those in charge of study meetings and film-clubs will do well to remember this passage from the letter of the Holy See to the OCIC Congress at Havana (1957): "The classification is not a censorship imposed from outside, but a constituent element of the judgment of every well formed Christian conscience. It would be all

the more inadmissible to present to categories of spectators, on the pretext of study, films declared to be bad and harmful for them, or else to let children see films reserved for adults. True cinema culture cannot be conceived outside the laws of morality."

IV. APPROXIMATION BETWEEN THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

23. The National Offices will make a real effort to bring about an approximation between the classifications of the different countries. They will avoid as far as possible spectacular divergencies that might perturb minds and discredit the work of moral appreciation of films. It is not necessary, however, to aim at necessarily classifying the same films in the same categories, which would be a denial of national differences and of the very reasons for which the classification must be made by and for each country.

24. Nor should there be an attempt to introduce the use of the same signs (figures or letters) in all countries; this is really a matter of secondary importance and the complications such a uniformization would entail for many countries would be disproportionate to the advantage that could be hoped for.

25. The necessary effort at approximation should, on the contrary, aim at reaching as complete agreement as possible on the great categories of classification and on the criteria that govern them.

V. MORAL CATEGORIES

26. With few exceptions, the member countries of OCIC are in favour of the 5 categories: Films for everyone, for adolescents, for adults (possibly with reserves), films to be rejected, films condemned. It seems highly desirable that these categories should be used wherever their application is possible.

27. For the categories of Films, General Patronage, use should be made of the criteria laid down at the OCIC Study Days held in 1960 in Vienna:

    - Fear and Anguish: To eliminate anything which might frighten children; but to admit the moderate tension and suspense necessary to sustain interest.

    - Violence: To excise any brutality likely to cause nightmares or deaden natural compassion; but to allow that which might lead to a healthy release of pent-up emotions.

- **Religion:** To remove scenes which are against the religious beliefs of young viewers or which ridicule any religion or its ministers; but to encourage any film which inspires respect for religion in all its forms.

- **Family:** To eliminate allusions to disagreement between parents, to divorce, etc. where the problems touched exceed the young viewer's power of understanding; but to encourage films which show respect for parents and a healthy home atmosphere.

- **Sense of Duty:** To excise anything which glorifies or rewards laziness or carelessness; but to encourage that which exalts self-control and a sense of sacrifice.

- **Truth:** To avoid showing the success of lying or hypocrisy; but to encourage that which illustrates the final triumph of sincerity and truth.

- **Social Sense:** To eliminate anything which might lead to feelings of rivalry, vengeance, struggle between social classes or between races, pessimism with regard to society; but to encourage that which awakens a sense of collective responsibility and a sense of dedication in the service of an ideal.

- **Civic Spirit:** To eliminate anything which undermines respect for institutions and justice; but to encourage love of country and native soil, together with an understanding and respect for other peoples.

- **Sex:** To eliminate anything which might directly excite or stir youthful imagination, awaken premature or unhealthy curiosity; but to admit that which a child might see in his home-life, and in healthy moral surroundings.

- **Capacity of Understanding:** In a general sense, to beware of all which exceeds the powers of understanding of those of a determined age and which, thereby, runs the risk of leading to a dangerously false interpretation of the facts presented and a false conception of the important aspects of life.

When these categories are being applied, it is advisable to keep in mind that children are not generally capable of seeing a thing as a whole, but are on the contrary struck by details, to which, therefore, careful attention should be paid.

28. If it is considered useful to sub-divide the category of films for General Patronage, either the child's age might be indicated (and more particularly his mental age) or else the presence, in the film in question, of "certain elements less suitable for young children" might be pointed out to parents and educators.

29. For the category of films for adolescents, generally speaking, use will be made of the above criteria (No. 27) but the application of them will be more elastic.

30. On the other hand, certain elements will be considered particularly counter-indicated for adolescents. Thus on the plane of the image: the actions of young delinquents (unless they are very clearly condemned), attitudes that are in bad taste, indecent costumes, long hugs and kisses, the fascinating villain, acts of brutality and cruelty (also to animals). - On the plane of ideas and of dialogue: everything expressing contempt for the law, authority, morality and religion.

31. When a film as a whole is clearly positive and is of particular interest to young people, either as regards content or as regards aesthetic form, less severity can be shown for certain subsidiary elements the knowledge of which is often considered premature for young people, such as discrete allusions to misconduct, abortion, prostitution etc. Nowadays young people can be supposed to be familiar with these subjects very early and it is arguable that knowledge of certain negative things is necessary for their healthy initiation.

32. It seems preferable for psychological reasons to entitle this category "For adults and adolescents," in order not to depreciate it in the eyes of adults, who would be tempted, otherwise, to consider these films as works intended rather for the young.

33. Films fulfilling the following conditions will be classed in the category "for adults": films which, presenting adults' moral problems, are suitable only for people with a certain experience of life and who have attained a medium degree of intellectual, moral and spiritual maturity. - The theme or main idea is never immoral, but certain secondary ideas may be so, as the film describes life as it is, with its troubles and faults; the latter, however, are not shown in a sympathetic light and are rather condemned or at least passed over lightly. - Among the other elements (images, scenes, dialogues, etc.) no bad element is intolerable. Films classed in this category will mainly be films in which the entertainment value attenuates, for adults, the absence of a positive theme and films which present realistic images the effect of which, though harmless for adults, might be harmful for adolescents. - The general moral tone of the film as a whole is good or at least inoffensive.

34. It may be useful to designate as being suitable only for "mature adults" ("formed persons" or any other similar expression) films that run the risk of being misinterpreted by the mass of spectators, but which, objectively, do not contain really negative elements justifying "reserves." It should be examined, however, if,

according to the conditions of each country, such a sub-division does not run the risk of confusing the public and if it is not preferable to keep rather to a prudent use of the term "reserves."

35. When there is cause, it will be stated that a film is suitable for adults only "with reserves" or with "clear reserves" (strict reserves). The purpose of this qualification is to call the attention of the spectator to the fact that the film in question contains certain negative elements (ideological error, danger of wrong interpretation, regrettable scenes or images) which, without fundamentally modifying the morality of the film, should be pointed out, in order

- to warn the spectator that certain images and situations of the film in question may be harmful to him and urge him to stay away from it if he is vulnerable in that connection;
- to sharpen the judgment of the spectator regarding the objective value of the ideas expressed, direct his attention in the right direction and reduce the danger correspondingly;
- to re-establish objective moral order, lest non-objection may pass for tacit consent.

36. Films will be classified under the heading "adults with reservations" or "adults with clear reservations" when they are such that they cannot normally be seen without detriment except by adults with a formation above the average on the intellectual, moral and spiritual plane. In these films, the theme, or principal idea, is not frankly immoral, but can lead to serious confusion. Or again among the secondary elements, there are some immoral ones which are not condemned, the appreciation of which depends only on the judgment of each spectator.

37. The category "films not recommended" will contain films that even adults with a formation above the average should stay away from except for a really important reason.

38. Films will be ranked in this category on the basis of the following criteria: the immorality of the film lies either in the subject, or in the secondary ideas, or again in the other elements. Even if certain good elements in the film or its artistic value counteract to some extent its harmfulness, it should be ranked in this category when it proposes false conceptions as being natural and healthy, when it proposes as normal solutions to the problems of life: suicide, murder, adultery, free love, divorce, integrated as an essential part of the subject, without any effective corrective elsewhere; when it is set in a clearly unhealthy atmosphere; when the conclusion is deliberately pessimistic, when a bad element is intolerable. As a whole, such films are considered as being generally bad for all publics.

39. The classification "to be rejected" or "condemned," means that films ranked in this category cannot be seen--especially in public cinemas--except for very grave reasons; in addition to the direct danger these films present in themselves for the normal spectator, they are of such a nature that to patronize them constitutes moral and material collaboration in a grave and certain evil, and often, at the same time, an occasion of scandal.

40. To be ranked in this category are films that advocate bad or subversive ideas, depict evil in an attractive light or display it complacently, attack or mock religion or Christian values, contain scenes, images or dialogue that must be considered as an immediate occasion for grave sin for the average spectator. Films which, without perhaps reaching this degree of direct harmfulness, are particularly aggressive in intention or which contribute to the acceptance of inadmissible ideas or customs, will also be ranked in this category. That the author is sincere is not a sufficient criterion to save such a film from this condemnation.

VI. POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION

41. It is very desirable that in addition to the moral appreciation of films, every National Office should publish a positive recommendation of deserving films. Avoiding overlapping with the national and international awarding of "Prizes," and with the organized promotion of selected films by the special OCIC services, positive recommendation should be made on the basis of the general human and spiritual qualities of a film, and its technical and aesthetic qualities as well.

42. The awarding of the positive recommendation may be entrusted to the committee that is already responsible for the moral appreciation of films, on condition that this committee includes competent persons in the technical and aesthetic field and provided the selection is carried out with the necessary discernment in order not to compromise the authority of the committee on its own plane, which is that of the moral value of films.

One year later, at the Cuernavaca, Mexico, congress, Fr. Leo Lunders of the Belgian national film office lauded the adoption of the foregoing document and noted the historical development of classification from the role of a warning device to that of an advisory aid to film choice.[121]

Among the various alleged sources of NCOMP policy, the most important, by far, is the Production Code. Papal documents have had very little influence. Vigilanti Cura came after the founding of the Legion and the drafting of the Code and seems to have been influenced by both, not influential on either. Miranda Prorsus is referred to frequently by NCOMP and quoted as having a favorable attitude toward the film industry. But these are selective quotations which ignore the strong negative tone of the document. The Ideal Film has formulated many of the recently employed ideas of NCOMP, particularly in its notion of artistic honesty and integrity. Ironically, this document is not an encyclical, but two ad hoc addresses of Pius XII, which the Legion has publicized. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether The Ideal Film caused this approach or merely was employed later to document a domestically originated policy.

The most influential source of policy, after the Code itself, was the 1957 Censorship statement by all the American bishops. This marked the turning point of Legion attitudes and led to the concept of advisory voluntary classification which ultimately changed the Code itself. Not the Pope, but the United States Supreme Court was cited by the bishops.

Principles of Policy

Synthesizing all the policy statements of the Legion and NCOMP, the following principles emerge as formative:

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[121] Actes du conseil general extraordinaire de l'OCIC, Cuernavaca, 1966 (Brussels: OCIC, 1966), IV-1.

1. Motion pictures are a powerful medium that shape the moral attitudes of the audience.

2. The nature of the film medium is designed for mass distribution.

3. The mass audience must be protected from:

    a. Films that subvert traditional values of loyalty and respect toward the public institutions of law and order and the private institution of marriage and the family.
    b. Films that present occasions of sin by means of provocative treatment, especially in sexual matters.
    c. Films that exploit sex and violence for their own sake, with no artistic or dramatic necessity.
    d. Films that seriously present false and superficial standards for human behaviour and motivation.

4. Children need special protection from such films.

5. Government censorship of films is against the American tradition of free expression and minimum legal restraint.

6. The mass audience itself should control the moral tone of the film industry's products, by selective patronage.

7. NCOMP provides advisory guidance to Catholics among the mass audience by means of its classifications.

8. Catholic parents have a duty to watch over their children's film-viewing habits.

9. NCOMP has a mandate to encourage the good as well as restrain the evil in films:

    a. Through awards and promotion of good films,
    b. Through fostering film education.

10. The film industry has a serious obligation to serve the community by policing itself and clearly labeling its products for the appropriate segment of the mass market voluntarily.

The next chapter has examined the practice of this policy as it relates to the primary role of NCOMP: film classification.

CHAPTER IV

FILM CLASSIFICATION

This chapter is devoted to an examination of the what, who, how, and why of film classification as it is practiced by NCOMP. The meaning of categories is defined, the background and qualifications of NCOMP reviewers detailed. The judgments of individual reviewers on 48 sample films is also studied, and the operative criteria for these classification judgments presented.

The Meaning of Classification Categories

When the Legion was founded, four categories were used: A-I for general patronage, A-II for adults only, B for objectionable in part, and C for condemned films. The third category, B, has never been clearly defined and seems to defy definition. Facey has called it a "residual" category, for films that are not condemned, nor yet acceptable.[1] He has listed the successive captions used to explain the category in the first two years of Legion activity, beginning with the original caption used by the Chicago list of Fr. FitzGeorge Dinneen's group:

> Pictures in this group are considered more or less objectionable in spots because of their possible suggestiveness or vulgarity or sophistication or lack of modesty. Neither approved nor forbidden, but for adults only.

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[1] Facey, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

> Accepted with reservation.
>
> Not recommended. Pictures in this classification are neither recommended nor are they condemned because partly unsatisfactory either in subject matter or treatment.
>
> Disapproved for youth with a word of caution even for adults.
>
> Objectionable in part.[2]

The last description has remained to this day and was used first in early 1936. The C classification has remained constant in meaning until the policy stand on The Pawnbroker, when C was used for "technical reasons of nudity" without implying that the film was totally offensive.[3]

The acceptable or A categories were expanded in 1958 with the introduction of A-III, for adults only, which relegated A-II to include adolescents as well as adults. Previously there was no intermediate group between adults and children in the categories.[4]

Another addition was made to the A categories with the introduction of A-IV in 1963. The Legion claimed that this was not a new category, but merely a clearer designation for the old "Separate Classification." This category was used for films which although "not morally offensive in themselves" could be wrongly interpreted by the uninformed with regard to the theme of the film. The "Separate Classification," according to the Legion, caused a double confusion because of its title.

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[4] Report, 1958, p. 11.

Some people thought it meant that the film was specially recommended, and others thought that it meant that the film was even below condemnation.[5]

A more likely explanation for this change of title is that the function of the "Separate Classification," used originally for a moral film with unacceptable political overtones, Blockade,[6] was now being employed to cover seriously intended films which treated hitherto unacceptable material. According to Legion records, the "Separate Classification" had only been used 11 times from 1936 to 1961 inclusive. In 1962 alone it was used 10 times. In 1963 the new A-IV was employed 11 times. In subsequent years the A-IV was used more than this.[7] La Dolce Vita was given a "Separate Classification" in 1961, a position which shocked many Catholics. The reason for the classification was that the theme of the film was "animated by a moral spirit," despite "highly sensational subject matter" and "shocking" treatment.[8]

NCOMP has a mimeographed explanation of each category and an attached description of "adulthood" as they understand it, since this concept is involved in all categories save A-I. These explanations are current and are published periodically by Catholic newspapers which carry the NCOMP ratings. They are available to anyone who writes NCOMP to obtain them. The explanations read as follows:

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[5] Report, 1963, p. 16.

[6] Cf. Chapter II, Documents Formative of Policy.

[7] See Table XX, Appendix A.

[8] Report, 1961, p. 23.

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR MOTION PICTURES
453 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

EXPLANATION OF FILM CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASS A, SECTION I	Morally Unobjectionable for General Patronage These films are considered to contain no material which would be morally dangerous to the average motion picture audience,--adults, adolescents and children alike.
CLASS A, SECTION II	Morally Unobjectionable for Adults & Adolescents These are films which in themselves are morally harmless but which, because of subject matter or treatment, require some maturity and experience which are presumed to be present in normal adults and adolescents. Adolescence as commonly understood is the period which follows the age of puberty and extends indefinitely to a terminus which must be prudently estimated by the individual judgment of parents, directors and guardians.
CLASS A, SECTION III	Morally Unobjectionable for Adults Films in this classification require a maturity of judgment which is supported by a normal emotional stability and a knowledge and understanding of basic Christian truths and moral values.
CLASS A, SECTION IV	Morally Unobjectionable for Adults with Reservations This classification is given to certain films which, while not morally offensive in themselves, require caution and some analysis and explanation as a protection to the uninformed against wrong interpretations and false conclusions.

CLASS B	Morally Objectionable in Part, for All Films in this category contain elements which can be the cause of serious harm in the area of Christian morality and traditionally accepted moral behavior patterns.
CLASS C	Condemned Condemned films are considered to be those which, because of theme or treatment, have been described by the Holy Father as "positively bad."

ADULTHOOD

The term adulthood, in its complete sense, does not necessarily depend upon age. Age, of course, constitutes a measure of approximate determination. Adulthood, in its complete sense, involves a certain amount of maturity--physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

One should hesitate to become so specific as to mention a definite age at which, in all cases, childhood and adolescence cease and adulthood begins.

It is necessary to be familiar with the indicators and factors which interpose themselves, viz., physical age, scholastic grade and grading, capacity to perceive, face, solve or adjust to the various problems of life and existence--degree of possession of ideals, standards and motivations--accessibility, competence and effectiveness of parental, pedagogical and religious guidance--domestic, social and economic environment--et cetera.

Parents, clergymen and teachers having in their care and charge children and adolescents are in particularly advantageous positions to judge the time of the inception of adulthood.

The person who takes the pledge of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures promises to remain away from pictures dangerous to his moral life. This pledge imposes no new obligation but is an explicit statement of the obligation to avoid the occasion of sin. If an "A-IV" or a "B" picture would be dangerous to one's moral life, then one would be obliged to remain away from it.

In 1964 the Legion felt that its classification system reflected the ideal stated by Pius XII in Miranda Prorsus:

> If they [the national offices; for the U. S., NCOMP] have clearly and publicly indicated which films can be seen by all, by the young, by adults, and those, on the other hand, which are a moral danger to the spectators, and finally, those which are entirely bad and harmful, then each will be able to attend those films only from which they will come out with minds happier, freer [sic] and better."[9]

For the justification of the A-IV classification, the Legion cited Vigilanti Cura: "films which are permitted with reservations."[10]

Prescinding from the difficulty of applying these categories to individual films, one can see that the categories themselves have blurred edges--and perhaps the middle is murky too. What makes a film "entirely bad?" The Supreme Court of the United States has had enough trouble making similar judgments with regard to print media that must be seen to have "no redeeming social" relevance.[11]

Except for A-I, the other A categories seem to include many non-moral criteria, not least of which is the comprehensibility of a film's intended purpose or theme relevant to an age group. Confusion may be uncomfortable, but it cannot be said to be an occasion of sin. It is therefore not clear whether the films restricted to certain age groups or groups of "more mature" viewers are restricted to preserve less advanced groups from sin or from intellectual challenges beyond their competence.

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[9] Quoted in The National Legion of Decency: Thirty Years of Christian Witness (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1964), p. 6.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Cf. Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476 (1957). Cf. also Zechariah Chafee, Jr., Free Speech in the United States (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 529-90; Terence J. Murphy, Censorship: Government and Obscenity (Baltimore: Helicon Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 99-179.

In the United States, there are only two other comparably structured classification systems in use. The first is that used by the Protestant Motion Picture Council since 1945: A for adults, over 18; MY for mature young people; Y for young people over 12; F for family or people of all ages, and C for children unaccompanied by an adult.[12] The Green Sheet, the publication that the Motion Picture Association of America sponsors as the reviewing organ for PCA approved films, prints classifications for films in identical categories, except that it eschews the mention of the explicit ages, 12 and 18. The Green Sheet reflects the ratings of ten separate organizations, both secular and religious, including the Protestant Motion Picture Council. These categories make no pretensions of dealing directly with the morality or immorality of films, but rather with their "audience suitability." They do not rate films that are not approved already by the PCA.[13]

The British Board of Film Censors, whose function corresponds to that of the PCA in America, classifies films in three categories: U for general exhibition, A for "more suitable for adult audiences" (children under 16 without parent or guardian not admitted) and X for adults only. The Board has no code, no rules. The Board, headed by Secretary John Trevelyan, exercises individual judgment of what is acceptable to community standards. Having a pre-set catalogue of rules would make the reviewing task impractical.[14]

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[12] Giglio, op. cit., p. 243.

[13] Ibid., p. 244.

The application of NCOMP categories to individual films has been examined below. First, a survey of the reviewers who apply the categories is in order.

NCOMP Reviewers

The Production Code Administration has a board of five fully employed reviewers under Geoffrey Shurlock for both screenings and script consultation.[15] NCOMP, on the other hand, which only screens films already completed, has a pool of 84 consultors who review films. This pool of consultors is by no means a constant body. Only 21 of the consultors have been reviewing films for NCOMP for more than five years, and 15 of the consultors have only been with NCOMP for less than one year. (See Table I.) The amount of reviewing each consultor does for NCOMP also varies. The plurality of consultors (43) review two or three films each month for NCOMP, but 11 consultors see only one film a month and an equal number review more than five films a month.[16]

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[14] Interview with Mr. John Trevelyan, Secretary of British Board of Film Censors, at 3 Soho Square, London, on June 2, 1967.

[15] Interview with Mr. Shurlock, August 17, 1967.

[16] Information on the consultors was drawn from the files of NCOMP on September 15, 1967.

TABLE I

COMPOSITION OF NCOMP BOARD OF CONSULTORS
SEPTEMBER 15, 1967

Characteristics	Number
Total number	84
Years of service with NCOMP:	
Less than 1	15
1	13
2 to 5	35
More than 5	21
	84
Number of films reviewed monthly:	
1	11
2 or 3	43
4 or 5	19
More than 5	11
	84
Status in the Roman Catholic Church:	
Laity	46
Priests	29
Brothers	6
Sisters	3
	84
Number of parents:	20
Occupation:	
Teachers	25
Professions	26
Business	11
Arts	2
Parish Priests	12
Housewives	8
	84

TABLE I (Continued)

Characteristics	Number
Education:	
Catholic	78
Secular	6
	84
High School graduates	2
College graduates	82
	84
Master's Degree	44
Doctoral Degree	10
Other graduate degree	27
	81
Age:	
Under 25	5
25 to 35	35
35 to 45	21
45 to 50	8
50 to 60	12
Over 60	3
	84
Sex:	
Men	58
Women	26
	84

A bare majority (46) of the 84 consultors are members of the laity and thus not part of the Catholic ecclesiastical "establishment," who are represented by 29 priests, six religious brothers and three religious sisters or nuns. Nevertheless, the Catholic indoctrination of the consultors is impressively evident in the fact that only six of the 84 consultors have not attended Catholic schools.

The general educational level of the consultors is high: All but two are college graduates and over half (44) have Master's degrees. Doctoral and other graduate degrees in medicine, law, and theology are held by 37 consultors. The pertinence of concepts of "adulthood" and suitability of film fare for children to NCOMP classifications lends significance to the facts that 20 of the consultors are parents and 25 are teachers.

As opposed to the early days of the Legion when the majority of reviewers were women of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, the current NCOMP reviewers have more than twice as many men as women (58 to 26). The consultors are also a predominantly young adult group. The largest age group is in the 25 to 35 bracket (35), followed by the 35 to 45 bracket (21). Only 15 consultors are over 50.

Questionnaire Findings

The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the knowledge of NCOMP reviewers about the film world and the policy of the Roman Catholic Church on films, relative to this study. The questionnaire further sought to sound out the reviewers' opinions about the morality of films and the criteria they personally employed to classify films.

The results of the questionnaire have been displayed in tabular form in the following pages, followed by a discussion of these results under three headings: (1) Knowledge of Films, (2) Personal Criteria for Film Classification, (3) Catholic Influences. The return-response of the questionnaires was 75 per cent, 63 questionnaires returned out of 84 sent.

Knowledge of films. Questions 1 through 3 asked the consultors about the critics, books, and directors they preferred. The answers to these questions reveal the extent of the acquaintance consultors have with three areas important for a knowledge of the fim world.

As a group, the consultors mentioned thirty critics. Only 12 consultors failed to mention more than one critic. Two or three critics were mentioned by 38 consultors. (See Table II.) The most favored critics were Judith Crist (43) formerly with the now-defunct World-Journal Tribune of New York, and Bosley Crowther (24) who retired as critic of The New York Times in December of 1967. The next two critics preferred by consultors were Catholic critics writing for Catholic magazines: Moira Walsh of the Jesuit weekly America and Phil Hartung of The Commonweal, a bi-weekly edited by liberal Catholic laymen. For the rest, there is a great breadth and variety of both affiliation and competence, from Hollis Alpert (3) and Arthur Knight (4) who write criticism for the Saturday Review, to Kay Cameron (5) of The New York Daily News to Time magazine (2).

TABLE II

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1: "THE FILM CRITICS WHOSE JUDGMENTS I MOST RESPECT ARE":

Critic	Number of respondents who chose this critic
Judith Crist	43
Bosley Crowther	24
Moira Walsh	20
Phil Hartung	7
Kay Cameron	5
Edward Fischer	5
Stanley Kaufmann	5
Arthur Knight	4
Pauline Kael	4
Hollis Alpert	3
Maryvonne Butcher (London Tablet)	2
Jerry Cotter	2
Walter Kerr*	2
Time	2
Richard Schickel	2
James Agee	1
James Arnold	1
Ronald Bryden	1
Ernest Callenbach	1
John Fitzgerald	1
Marc Gervais	1
Martin Gottfried	1
Dorothy Manners	1
William Mooring	1
J. Morgenstern	1
J. D. Nicola	1
Andrew Sarris	1
Ardis Smith	1
Abe Weiler	1
William Wolf	1

Number of critics named by each respondent:

Number of respondents:	Number of critics:
1	9
1	6
4	5
5	4
14	3
24	2
12	1
2	0
63	

*Walter Kerr is drama, not film, critic of _The New York Times_.

More than half (36) of the 63 respondents did not name any books on film. Of the 27 who cited books, only six restricted their response to one book; 18 cited two to four books. The majority of these books were on the history, technique, and criticism of the cinema. (See Table III.) Two books were not in any way connected with films: John Courtney Murray's We Hold These Truths, a collection of essays on the American tradition of political freedom and its relationship with the pluralist ethnic and religious minority groups in America; and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's The Divine Milieu, a personal testament of this French Jesuit's spiritual and humanist outlook. Four books are only indirectly related to films: Walter Kerr's The Decline of Pleasure, Marshall McLuhan's Understanding Media, and Gilbert Seldes' The Great Audience deal with the effect of mass media on the audience and the usethe audience makes of available mass-produced cultural products; Aristotle's Poetics, of course, is the classic treatment of the catharsis theory of drama. One book, Harold Gardiner's Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship, deals with the problem of censorship in print media--a problem which the respondent presumably feels is analogous to the NCOMP classification of films.

The directors chiefly preferred by the respondents are the most respected and established: Federico Fellini (29), director of La Dolce Vita, La Strada, and Nights of Cabiria; Fred Zinnemann (22), director of From Here to Eternity, High Noon, The Nun's Story, and A Man for All Seasons; and Ingmar Bergman (19), director of The Seventh Seal, The Silence, Wild Strawberries, and Winter Light. Among the 52 directors

TABLE III

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2: "THE MOST HELPFUL BOOK(S) I'VE READ ON FILM ARE":

Book	Number of respondents who chose this book
Arthur Knight. *The Liveliest Art*. New York: Mentor Books, 1959.	6
William F. Lynch, S.J. *The Image Industries*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1959.	6
Pauline Kael. *I Lost It at the Movies*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965.	5
Edward Fischer. *The Screen Arts*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960.	4
Penelope Houston. *The Centemporary Cinema*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1963.	4
Siegfried Kracauer. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.	4
James Agee. *Agee on Film*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.	3
Sergei Eisenstein. *Film Form and the Film Sense*. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1957.	3
Harold Gardiner, S.J., and Moira Walsh. *Tenets for Readers and Reviewers*. New York: America Press Pamphlet, 1944.	3
[*Film Quarterly*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.	2]
Richard Dyer MacCann. *Film: A Montage of Theories*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1966.	2
Pope Pius XII. *Miranda Prorsus: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television*. Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1957.	2

TABLE III (Continued)

Book	Number of respondents who chose this book
Parker Tyler. Classics of the Foreign Film. London: Spring Books, 1966.	2
Aristotle. Poetics.	1
"A book on Bergman's work."	1
"Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication," The Documents of Vatican II. Ed. Walter Abbott, S.J. New York: America Press, 1966.	1
Joseph Franklin. Classics of the Silent Screen. New York: Citadel Press, 1960.	1
Harold Gardiner, S.J. Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961.	1
Frank Getlein and Harold Gardiner, S.J. Movies, Morals and Art. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961.	1
Richard Edward Griffith and Arthur Mayer. The Movies. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1957.	1
Lewis Jacobs, The Rise of the American Film. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1941.	1
Pope John XXIII. Boni Pastoris. Reprinted in The Pope Speaks, V. 3 (Summer, 1959).	1
Walter Kerr. The Decline of Pleasure. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.	1
John Howard Lawson. Film: The Creative Process. 2d. ed. New York: Hill & Wang, 1964	1

TABLE III (Continued)

Book	Number of respondents who chose this book
Emile McAnany, S.J., and Robert Williams, S.J. The Filmviewer's Handbook. Glen Rock, N.J.: The Paulist Press, 1965.	1
Richard Dyer MacCann. Hollywood in Transition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962.	1
Richard Dyer MacCann. (ed.) Film and Society. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964.	1
Marshall McLuhan. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965.	1
Haig P. Manoogian. The Film-Maker's Art. New York: Basic Books, 1966.	1
John Courtney Murray, S.J. We Hold These Truths. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960.	1
Ivor Montagu. Film World. Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1964.	1
Vsevolod Illarionovitch Pudovkin. Film Technique and Film Acting. Trans. and ed. Ivor Montagu. New York: Grove Press, 1960.	1
Vsevolod Illarionovitch Pudovkin. "Stanislavsky's System in the Cinema." Trans. T. Shebunina. Sight and Sound, XXII, 3 (Jan.-March, 1953), pp. 115-18, 147-48.	1
Dore Schary. Case History of a Movie. New York: Random House, 1950.	1
Richard Schickel. Movies: The History of an Art and an Institution. New York: Basic Books, 1964.	1
Gilbert Seldes. The Great Audience. New York: Viking Books, 1950.	1

TABLE III (Continued)

Book	Number of respondents who chose this book
Ralph Stephenson and J.R. Debrix. *The Cinema as Art*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1967.	1
Raymond Spottiswoode. *Film and Its Technique*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1951.	1
Raymond Spottiswoode. *A Grammar of the Film*. London: Faber & Faber, 1935.	1
John Russell Taylor. *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1964.	1
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. *The Divine Milieu*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.	1

Number of books named by each respondent:

Number of respondents:	Number of books:
2	7
1	5
2	4
9	3
7	2
6	1
36	0
63	

cited there is a wide range of styles, from foreign artists like Akira Kurosawa (7) to the zany avant-gardists like Richard Lester (5) to the traditional grand masters like C.B. de Mille (1) and Fritz Lang (1). Many of the preferred directors have made films condemned by NCOMP: Michelangelo Antonioni (7) directed Blow-Up, Bergman (19) directed The Silence, John Huston (13) directed Reflections in a Golden Eye, and Billy Wilder (7) directed Kiss Me, Stupid. (See Table IV.)

Questions 4 and 5 asked the consultors to name their favorite two films and their two most disfavored films, respectively, seen during the period 1962 to 1966. Respondents cited 54 "best" films and 63 "poorest" films. There was a wide diversity of opinion. No one film in either category was named more than 17 times, and the majority in both categories were named only once. Five films were even in both the "best" and the "poorest" categories: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (4 for "best," 1 for "poorest"), The Knack (3,2), Alfie (2,1), Darling (2,2), and Dr. Strangelove (1,1). (See Tables V and VI.)

Neither most favored nor most disfavored films cited by the respondents coincide with NCOMP classifications. Although the top "best" films, A Man For All Seasons (17), The Sound of Music (16), and My Fair Lady (9) were all in the A-I category and all received positive recommendations from NCOMP, four condemned films were cited as "best": The Silence (2), Blow-Up, Jules and Jim, and The Pawnbroker (each 1). Moreover, although the top "poorest" films, The Swinger (10), Kiss Me, Stupid (5), Oh Dad, Poor Dad (5), What's New Pussycat? (5), were

TABLE IV

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3: "THE FILM DIRECTORS WHOSE WORK I RESPECT MOST ARE":

Director	Number of respondents who chose this director
Federico Fellini	29
Fred Zinnemann	22
Ingmar Bergman	19
David Lean	14
John Huston	13
George Stevens	9
William Wyler	9
Vittorio DeSica	8
Michelangelo Antonioni	7
Akira Kurosawa	7
Billy Wilder	7
Robert Wise	6
John Ford	5
Alfred Hitchcock	5
Elia Kazan	5
Richard Lester	5
Tony Richardson	5
Sidney Lumet	4
Satyajit Ray	4
Francois Truffaut	4
Barry Yellen	4
Sergei Eisenstein	3
Robert Bresson	2
Rene Clair	2

TABLE IV (Continued)

Director	Number of respondents who chose this director
Rene Clement	2
Stanley Kubrick	2
Roman Polanski	2
Alain Resnais	2
Luchino Visconti	2
Orson Welles	2
Alfredo Bini	1
George Cukor	1
Michael Curtiz	1
Dino DeLaurentis	1
Cecil B. de Mille	1
John Frankenheimer	1
D. W. Griffith	1
Henry Hathaway	1
Howard Hawks	1
Henry King	1
Stanley Kramer	1
Fritz Lang	1
Mervyn LeRoy	1
Mike Nichols	1
Frank and Eleanor Perry	1
Otto Preminger	1
Carol Reed	1
Jean Renoir	1
Robert Rossen	1
John Schlesinger	1
W. S. Van Dyke	1
Eric Von Stroheim	1

TABLE IV (Continued)

Number of directors named by each respondent:	
Number of directors:	Number of respondents:
18	1
13	1
14	1
12	1
10	1
9	1
8	1
7	1
6	4
5	1
4	9
3	14
2	16
1	6
0	5
	63

TABLE V

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4: "GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE BEST TWO MOVIES I HAVE SEEN IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS ARE":

Film	NCOMP rating	Number of respondents who chose this film
A Man for All Seasons	A-I	17
The Sound of Music	A-I	16
My Fair Lady	A-I	9
The Pawnbroker	C, then A-III	5
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?	A-IV	4
Doctor Zhivago	A-II	4
The Gospel According to St. Matthew	A-I	3
Juliet of the Spirits	A-IV	3
The Knack	A-IV	3
Nobody Waved Goodbye	A-II	3
Tom Jones	A-IV	3
Alfie	A-IV	2
Becket	A-III	2
The Bridge on the River Kwai	A-I	2
The Collector	A-IV	2
Darling	A-IV	2
8 1/2	A-IV	2
Lilies of the Field	A-I	2
Mary Poppins	A-I	2
The Miracle Worker	A-II	2
The Seventh Seal	A-III	2
The Shop on Main Street	A-III	2
The Silence	C	2
Zorba the Greek	A-IV	2

TABLE V (Continued)

Film	NCOMP rating	Number of respondents who chose this film
The Ballad of a Soldier	A-II	1
La Belle Americaine	A-I	1
The Bible	A-I	1
Billy Budd	A-II	1
Blow-Up	C	1
David and Lisa	A-II	1
Divorce, Italian-Style	A-IV	1
La Dolce Vita	A-IV	1
The Greatest Story Ever Told	A-I	1
A Hard Day's Night	A-I	1
The Hustler	A-III	1
I'm Alright, Jack	A-III	1
Jules and Jim	C	1
The L Shaped Room	A-IV	1
The Luck of Ginger Coffey	A-III	1
Nothing But A Man	A-III	1
The Overcoat	B	1
The Parable (not shown commercially)	Not rated	1
Repulsion	C	1
Rashoman	B	1
Shakespeare Wallah	A-III	1
The Shameless Old Lady	A-II	1
Sundays and Cybele	A-III	1
A Thousand Clowns	A-III	1
Topkapi	A-III	1
Tunes of Glory	A-III	1
The Virgin Spring	A-III	1
Winter Light	A-III	1
No films named		1

TABLE VI

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5: "GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE POOREST TWO MOVIES I HAVE SEEN IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS ARE":[a]

Film	NCOMP rating	Number of respondents who chose this film
The Swinger	B	10
Kiss Me, Stupid	C	5
Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad	B	5
What's New, Pussycat?	B	5
The Loved One	B	4
Is Paris Burning?	A-I	3
The Sandpiper	B	3
The Americanization of Emily	B	2
Any Wednesday	A-III	2
The Balcony	C	2
Darling	A-IV	2
Hawaii	A-III	2
The Knack	A-IV	2
Love Has Many Faces	B	2
Mademoiselle	C	2
Mondo Pazzo	C	2
The Professionals	A-III	2
The Agony and the Ecstacy	A-II	1
Alfie	A-IV	1
The Bible	A-I	1
Bunny Lake is Missing	A-III	1
Circle of Love	C	1
Cleopatra	B	1
The Fall of the Roman Empire	A-I	1

TABLE VI (Continued)

Film	NCOMP rating	Number of respondents who chose this film
Doctor Strangelove	A-IV	1
Don't Worry, We'll Think of a Title	A-I	1
Empty Canvas	C	1
Fantastic Voyage	A-I	1
A Fine Madness	B	1
Fortune Cookie	A-III	1
The Green Mare	C	1
The Group	B	1
How To Stuff A Wild Bikini	B	1
It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World	A-I	1
Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter	A-II	1
Love and Marriage	C	1
Madame X	A-II	1
Never Too Late	A-III	1
La Notte	C	1
Of Wayward Love	C	1
Operation Crossbow	A-I	1
The Oscar	B	1
The Pad and How to Use It	A-III	1
Quick Before It Melts	B	1
Sand Pebbles	A-III	1
Seconds	B	1
The Secret Seven	A-I	1
The Servant	A-IV	1
Seven Slaves Against the World	A-II	1
Sex and the Single Girl	B	1

TABLE VI (Continued)

Film	NCOMP rating	Number of respondents who chose this film
The Silencers	B	1
The Singing Nun	A-I	1
Son of Captain Blood	A-I	1
Spy in Your Eye	A-II	1
Taboos of the World	A-IV	1
Take it All	C	1
The Victors	A-III	1
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?	A-IV	1
Viva Maria	B	1
Where the Bullets Fly	A-III	1
"Any Jerry Lewis film"		1
No films named		12

[a] Three respondents named only one film each.

all in the B or C categories, 32 of the "poorest" films were in A categories.

Despite this divergence between consultors' individual choices and NCOMP ratings, 58 of the 63 respondents felt that their opinions counted in the final ratings given films by NCOMP. (See Table VII.)

TABLE VII

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 6: "I BELIEVE THAT MY RATINGS RECEIVE CONSIDERATION FROM NCOMP OFFICIALS IN MAKING THEIR [CLASSIFICATION] DECISION - YES OR NO?"

Response	Number
Yes:	58
No:	1
Occasionally:	1
Not frequently:	1
Not sure:	2
	63

Personal criteria for film classification. Questions 7 and 8 asked the consultors to give their opinion of the most frequent and the most serious moral offenses of films.

The most frequent offenses were thought to be in the area of sex. Sensational treatment of sexual activity and indecent exposure drew the heaviest criticism (36). Thematic justification of illicit sex was also condemned, especially when it was felt to be romanticized and made glamorous (12). Only ten respondents felt that sensational portrayal of brutality was the most frequently morally offensive element in films. Although "suggestive dialogue" has been mentioned in the published reasons for B and C ratings no fewer than 143 times in the past ten years,[17] only four respondents cited this as a most frequent moral offense.

After sex in both treatment and theme, the most frequent offenses cited were thematic presentations of false standards of human conduct, in which affluence is made to seem the prime human value or in which human life is portrayed as futile (15). Since NCOMP ratings presumably do not concern themselves with non-moral elements in films,[18] it is significant that inanity and banality of theme and plot, qualities not usually placed in moral categories, were considered morally offensive by eight respondents. (See Table VIII.)

The most serious moral offenses in the respondents' collective view were overwhelmingly found to be thematic approval of immoral standards of conduct, whether these standards explicitly involved sexual behaviour or not (54). Half of these respondents felt that these false standards did explicitly involve sexual conduct (23), whether it were treated as a casual toy involving no responsibility (14) or glorified sex as an end in itself (9). Only 16 respondents explicitly mentioned the ethically corrupting influence of immoral

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[17] See Tables XVI through XIX, Chapter V.

[18] Cf. Chapter V, Rating Criteria.

TABLE VIII

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 7: "THE MOST FREQUENT MORAL OFFENSE OF FILMS IS":[a]

Offenses	Number of respondents who mentioned this offense
Sensational portrayal of sex	19
Indecent exposure without justification	17
Romantic portrayal of illicit sex	12
Sensational portrayal of brutality	10
Thematic advocacy of false moral standards	9
Banality and inanity	8
Treatment of sexual perversions	5
Vulgarity of language and gesture	5
Thematic advocacy of affluence as a prime human value	4
Suggestive dialogue	4
Preoccupation with licit or illicit sex	3
Ridicule of marriage as an institution	3
Denigration of the dignity and beauty of sex	2
Thematic advocacy of the futility of life	2
Thematic dishonesty (not true to life)	1
No opinion	2

[a] Note: Respondents answered in essay form. Each answer included several offenses, in isolation or in combination. The offenses mentioned are listed above separately.

films on the audience, a factor that papal pronouncements and NCOMP policy statements, as studied in the previous chapter, consider a paramount danger. Moreover, only three of these 16 respondents mentioned the arousal of sexual passion as the corrupting influence they had in mind. Lack of artistic substance, not usually a quality found in moral categories, was considered the most serious moral offense of films by 5 respondents. (See Table IX.)

On the whole, respondents felt that films offended most frequently by reason of treatment and most seriously by reason of theme.

Questions 10 and 11 asked consultors what moral good films might accomplish and what moral good films, as a matter of fact, had accomplished. Responses to both questions were remarkably similar. The only significant addition to actual accomplishments of films was that they might be used to promote world peace (11). (See Tables X and XI.)

Consultors views on what moral goods films might accomplish were neatly divided into two traditional approaches to art: humanist (64) and didactic (67). In the humanist tradition, consultors praised films for broadening and deepening our understanding of human experience (31), for providing light entertainment (14), for refining sensibilities and aiding self-discovery (5), for making drama available to the masses (5), for simply existing as art for its own sake (5), and finally, for evoking the sense of wonder and enlivening the sense of history (4). In the didactic tradition, consultors praised films for their ability to give us ideals and heroes that show us the value of a

TABLE IX

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 8: "THE MOST SERIOUS MORAL OFFENSE OF FILMS IS":[a]

Offenses	Number of respondents who mentioned this offense
Thematic presentation of artificial standards for human behaviour	22
Portrayal of sex as a casual toy	14
Portrayal of human life without morality	13
Themes and treatment corruptive of youth	11
Glorification of sex	9
Glorification of violence	9
Thematic advocacy of hedonism	8
Ridicule of moral standards	8
Thematic advocacy of social acceptance as prime human value	7
Technical excellence without artistic substance	5
Cumulative ethical effect of sex and violence on audience	3
Lack of reverence for life	3
Thematic advocacy of the futility of life	3
Treatment calculated to arouse sexual passions of the adolescent	3
Gradual dulling of conscience of audience	2
Producers' concern for profit exclusive of public responsibility	2
Thematic advocacy of adolescent viewpoint as opposed to adult viewpoint	2
Denigration of authority	1
False coming attractions	1

TABLE IX (Continued)

Offenses	Number of respondents who mentioned this offense
Inane and silly treatment of religion	1
Pretension of depth of meaning	1
Ridicule of Catholic Church	1
Sensationalism of any kind	1
Thematic advocacy of greed	1
Treatment of nudity undermining modesty	1
No opinion	2

[a] Note: Respondents answered in essay form. Each answer included several offenses, in isolation or in combination. The offenses mentioned are listed below separately.

TABLE X

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 10: "FILMS CAN ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING MORAL GOODS":[a]

Moral Goods	Number of respondents who chose this moral good
Give insight into the values of human life	22
Broaden knowledge and insight of viewers	19
Uphold morality	18
Inspire with hope	17
Aid in self-discovery of the viewer	15
Be a work of art for its own sake	15
Entertain	15
Overcome racial prejudice	15
Promote charity for all men	14
Reveal the variety of the human condition	14
Show evil as evil	12
Overcome religious prejudices	11
Overcome chauvenism	11
Educate	11
Promote peace	11
Provoke sense of wonder	9
Provide models of heroism	8
Give deeper notion of social justice	7
Promote patriotism	7
Promote honesty	6
Promote empathy for others	6
Promote sense of responsibility	6
Provide catharsis of emotional tension	5
Promote sanctity of marriage and the family	4
Promote Christian principles of behaviour	4
Enliven viewers' sense of history	2
Refine perception of viewers	2
Expose sham	1
Fight communism	1
No opinion	2

[a] Note: Respondents answered in essay form; the separable elements are listed with the number of respondents who mentioned them.

TABLE XI

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 11: "AS A MATTER OF FACT, FILMS HAVE ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING MORAL GOODS":[a]

Moral goods	Number of respondents who chose this moral good
Afford light entertainment	14
Foster international and inter-racial brotherhood	14
Inspire with hope	14
Illuminate with human condition	13
Show the value of a good life	13
Uphold morality	12
Show evil as evil	12
Broaden experience	9
Foster empathy for others	9
Hold up heroes for admiration	7
Be works of art for their own sake	5
Bring good drama to a wide audience	5
Educate	5
Aid self-discovery	3
Awaken to central issues of the time	3
Encourage the sense of wonder	3
Deepen conscience	2
Provide emotional catharsis	2
Promote virtues of family life	2
Refine sensibilities	2
Baby sit	1
Increase conversions to Catholicism	1
Enliven sense of history	1
Expose sham	1
Provide family entertainment	1
Provide no important moral good	4
Does not provide any moral good	2
No opinion	4

[a] Note: The answers were in essay form. Respondents mentioned many moral goods in isolation or in combination. Separate elements are listed below with the number of respondents who mentioned them.

good life (34), to foster international and inter-racial brotherhood (14), to show us the true face of evil (12), to deepen our consciences and to provide emotional catharsis (4), and finally to awaken the masses to the central issues of our time (3).

The responses to these two questions, and the close parallel between the ideal that films might accomplish and the actual good consultors felt films were achieving, indicate that the NCOMP reviewers do not view films from a purely negative standpoint as an evil to be checked and controlled.

Question 12 asked the consultors what their personal criteria were for classifying films in NCOMP categories.

The predominant criteria avoid the exclusively moralistic and are relevant to artistic criticism: Does the film fit together as an artistic whole? (32) Does it have an honesttheme? (27) Does it make a valid statement about man? (22) Does it show superior production techniques and measure up to the intentions of the writer and director? (20) Does it entertain in good taste? (11) (See Table XII.)

The possible corrupting effects on the audience are used by more consultors (36) as criteria than one would suspect from the number of consultors who considered the moral effects on the audience as serious or frequent moral offenses of films (16). Twenty-three consultors show concern for sexually stimulating treatment. The policy of NCOMP and the new Production Code is reflected by 20 consultors who use as one of their criteria the age group for which the film is suited. Only three consultors are worried that a film might be pornographic.

TABLE XII

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 12: "GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE FOLLOWING ARE THE CRITERIA OR NORMS I USE IN JUDGING A FILM FOR CLASSIFICATION (THE QUESTIONS I ASK MYSELF ABOUT THE FILM)":

Does the film	Number of respondents who ask this question
Fit together as an artistic whole	32
Have an honest theme	27
Have a corrupting or edifying effect	23
Make a valid statement about man	22
Aim at a particular age group and with what purpose	20
Have moral values	17
Contain sexually stimulating treatment	15
Encourage immorality	13
Glamorize evil	12
Show technical superiority	11
Show evil punished	10
Achieve its purpose	9
Show sensational nudity	8
Show sensational violence	8
Have human relevance	7
Entertain	6
Exhibit good taste	5
Challenge the viewer	4
Contain vulgar language	4
Justify its treatment by its theme	4
Have a good or bad effect on average	
Catholic high school graduate	4
Catholic college graduate	4

TABLE XII (Continued)

Does the film	Number of respondents who ask this question
Conform to facts, if historical drama	3
Contain harmful or harmless trash	3
Contain pornography	3
Contain propaganda	3
Contain racial or religious stereotypes	3
Embarass viewer	3
Enlighten	3
Meet tastes and needs of intended viewers	3
Uplift morally	3
Adhere to the Christian ethic	2
Attack institution of marriage	2
Present favorable image of America to the world	2
Attack Christianity	1
Contain obscene gestures or postures	1
Leave a bad aftertaste	1
Offend seriously or trivially	1
Require special comment from NCOMP	1
Set a trend with possible evil effects	1
Use sheer sensationalism	1

A relatively small number of consultors show the same kind of criteria used by the old Production Code: Is evil punished? (10) Is the violence offensive? (8) Is the language vulgar? (4) Are there religious or racial stereotypes? (3) Are obscene postures or gestures present? (1)

Only three respondents answered Question 12 in terms of the NCOMP categories of classification. (See Table XIII.) Question 13 asked the consultors whether they approved or disapproved of the NCOMP classification system. Of the 63 respondents, 45 approved of the system in general but they had particular criticisms to make. Fifteen respondents disapproved of the system. The criticism centered on the vagueness of the categories and the need for a new category for "harmless trash" films and for films suitable only for children. (See Table XIV.) This question has been discussed further in Chapter V.

Catholic influences. Among the critics preferred by respondents, two Catholic critics, Moira Walsh (20) of America and Phil Hartung (7) of Commonweal occupy the third and fourth positions from the top. Maryvonne Butcher (2) of the English Tablet, a Catholic magazine published in London, and Edward Fischer (5) are the only other Catholics mentioned more than once. Among the preferred directors, Federico Fellini (29) is a Catholic whose films, in their Italian setting, have dealt with the Catholic Church, not as central subject matter but as part of the cultural milieu. In 8 1/2, for instance, the Catholic training of the main character is seen as a disturbing influence in his youth. Fred Zinnemann (22) directed The Nun's Story and A Man

TABLE XIII

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 12 STRUCTURED ACCORDING TO NCOMP CATEGORIES

(Three respondents followed this procedure.)

Category	Determining criterion	Number of respondents choosing this criterion
A-I	Would not frighten nor puzzle a child.	2
A-II	Would not sexually arouse teenagers nor corrupt their ideals.	2
A-III	A serious and honest theme whose treatment might disturb an adolescent.	3
A-IV	A serious and honest theme which might demoralize a non-sophisticated adult.	3
B	A pandering film with some redeeming value.	2
	"I never understood the B category."	1
C	A calculated assault on baser appetites.	2
	Complete nudity.	1

TABLE XIV

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 13: "I APPROVE/DISAPPROVE OF THE CURRENT NCOMP CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM BECAUSE":

Type of Response	Number of respondents
45 approved: Among these respondents the following qualifications were made:	
A-IV is too frequently a catch-all category	4
Published reasons for classifications should be more detailed	3
A-II is too broad a category	2
A-III, A-IV, and B overlap and are too vague	2
"Condemned" is too strong a term for a category	2
"For children only" category is sorely needed	2
Terminology should be more clear; e.g., "F" for "Family"	2
A-II should be discontinued	1
B is a puzzling category	1
Only objectionable films should be listed	1
Nudity as such should not be condemned	1
15 disapproved: Among these respondents the following reasons were cited:	
"Harmless trash" category is needed	5
Reviews should be substituted for categories	3
Categories are too cumbersome for NCOMP reviewers to use	2
A-IV is too broad a category	1
Concentration on sex distorts system	1
Consultors are not in control of the classifications	1
Lists of ratings should not publish B and C ratings	1
Nudity as such should not be condemned	1
Reviews from other sources make the classifications superfluous	1
The system NCOMP uses gives the impression of God as Policeman	1
The NCOMP system is applied legalistically and dogmatically	1
Usefulness of NCOMP is restricted to parents and children	1
Violence is accepted too easily by the system	1
The whole system is ignored and thus ineffective	1
3 respondents had no opinion.	

For All Seasons, the former about the troubled life of a nun who ultimately decides to leave the religious life, the latter about a Catholic saint, Thomas More, who in conscience opposes King Henry VIII's Rule of Supremacy which put the king above the pope in local ecclesiastical matters of government. It would be straining, however, to see in the choice of these two men by the respondents a motivation based on the ideology seen in some of their films. For one thing, these directors are justly eminent for other films and are considered masters of their trade by secular judgment. For another, no such relationship can be seen in the work of any of the other directors.

None of the books which were cited more than once deal with films from a Catholic point of view except for William F. Lynch's The Image Industries (6), Harold Gardiner's and Moira Walsh's Tenets for Readers and Reviewers, and Pope Pius XII's encyclical, Miranda Prorsus. Among all the citations of different titles, secular books outnumber Catholic books 57 to 24.

A Man For All Seasons was the favorite film of the respondents--and it also won the Academy Award for 1967. Of all the favorite films cited, one religious film, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (3) received more than one citation from the respondents. The Bible, The Greatest Story Ever Told and The Parable are the only religious films cited even once. The Bible, along with The Singing Nun, however, also received one vote as the "poorest" film.

Of all the offenses the consultors felt films were guilty of, ridicule of the Catholic Church was mentioned once. Formal religion did not enter into any response concerned with moral offenses. One respondent thought that films had somehow managed to increase conversions to Catholicism and four respondents hoped that films would promote Christian principles of behaviour. None of the other responses mentioned Catholicism or formal religion in connection with the moral good that films might do or had done. Among the personal criteria used by respondents in classifying films, adherence to the Christian ethic was mentioned by two respondents and anti-Christian theme, as a negative criterion, was mentioned by one respondent. No other formally religious criteria were employed.

Question 9 asked the consultors what in their opinion was the most important Roman Catholic Church statement on the film. Twenty-eight respondents could think of no important statement. Five respondents named NCOMP's own statements released with the ratings of Virginia Woolf and Alfie.[19] Thirty-three respondents cited different documents of the universal Church: papal statements and the Vatican II Decree on the Instruments of Communication. (See Table XV.)

How much the specific doctrines of Catholicism influence NCOMP reviewers in their classification of films cannot be measured. But the actual choices of critics, directors, and films the respondents made do not reveal any specifically Catholic influence. The number of Catholic books respondents cited as helpful does reveal a Catholic bias in a general way. None of the Catholic books, however, are

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[19] These statements are quoted among the sample films.

TABLE XV

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 9: "THE MOST IMPORTANT /ROMAN CATHOLIC/ CHURCH STATEMENT, IN MY OPINION, ON THE FILM IS":

Statement	Number of respondents who chose this statement
"Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication," Documents of Vatican II. Ed. Walter Abbott, S.J. New York: America Press, 1966.	14
Pope Pius XII. Miranda Prorsus: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1957.	10
Published NCOMP ratings of Alfie and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?	5
Pope Pius XI. Vigilanti Cura: Encyclical Letter on Motion Pictures. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1936.	4
Pope Pius XII. The Ideal Film. New York: National Legion of Decency, 1955.	3
Statement of Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, December 7, 1962.	2
The National Legion of Decency: Thirty Years of Christian Witness. /Statement of the Episcopal Committee for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television, April 15, 1964./ Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1964.	2
Avery Dulles, S.J. The Legion of Decency. New York: America Press Pamphlet, 1956.	2
Msgr. Thomas F. Little. "The Modern Legion and Its Modern Outlook," America, December 11, 1961.	2
Pope John XXIII. Boni Pastoris. Reprinted in The Pope Speaks, V, 3 (Summer, 1959).	1

TABLE XV (Continued)

Statement	Number of respondents who chose this statement
Bishop James A. McNulty. "The Spirit of the Legion of Decency," America, March 11, 1961.	1
Amletto Cardinal Cicognani. Letter in the name of Pope John XXIII to the participants of the 35th Italian /Social/ Study Week, September 24-30, 1962: "The extreme consequences of the bad use of these media impose very strict duties on all those who share responsibility for their use, lest modern man lose consciousness of his dignity."	1

Number of statements named in each response:

Statements	Responses
4	1
3	2
2	5
1	27
0	28
	63

doctrinal. They are books about films or censorship or mass media from a general Christian viewpoint. The papal encyclicals are doctrinal, but they are only cited three times in response to Question 2.

Supplementary Interviews to Questionnaire

Since any tabular summation of complex attitudes is an oversimplification, the following pages offer extended quotations from five consultors on their criteria for classifying films. In the judgment of the researcher, these five consultors represent the spread of opinion revealed in the questionnaire.

Consultor A:

> I ask one basic question first of all: does the picture in all probability--as a whole or in part--constitute a proximate occasion of sin for viewers of any category? That's very very moralistic, but it is necessary. It is usually also very easy to answer. But if it is not clear, I am very slow to give less than A-III or A-IV [i.e., B or C]. . . . Now, if there is some moral problem, perhaps it is offset considerably by the theme (what the picture says), by the plot (what happens), by brilliant acting and, particularly in the case of A-IV pictures, by the special maturity and/or education of the group to which it is recommended. Sometimes these qualities consititute adequate basis for ignoring what might be originally construed as a moral problem. But this is not a matter of mathematical formula.[20]

Consultor B:

> The only general criteria or norm I use in judging a film for classification is the aesthetic one. It is the view that [films are] aesthetic objects . . . rather than moral acts. . . . I feel there is need for a healthy impatience with the moralistic manner in which society often receives new aesthetic objects. . . . The higher the aesthetic value, the more likely is the

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[20] Interview with Consultor A, New York City, January 5, 1967.

> object to be unsettling, radical, vigorous, shocking, subversive--at first, anyway from the Philistine viewpoint. . . . If what [the artist] makes is good, it will be the enemy of some established good that is not quite as good. [sic.][21]

Consultor C:

> First, I ask myself if I liked it. If I did, I ask why, and if these values are consistent with the values taught by the Church. The criteria I use for classification differ from aesthetic criteria. I ask first whether there was an offense to the eye that was not excusable, or to the ear, the language used. Then I ask the [main] question: Is the idea behind the film valid? Are any of the means taken to express the idea acceptable here while not elsewhere? And if the idea is impressive, but the means doubtful, which one is to win out in the ratings?
>
> One of the inbred failings of the ratings is that they concentrate on things that are offensive to the senses--sight and sound--which are only serious moral wrongs when they are presented in and for themselves. Generally they are condemned even when they are used as means [to convey the theme]. But more serious than this, the NCOMP has no way of indicating those films which do not employ nudity, depravity, obscene language, and are nevertheless masterpieces of distortion, inanity, spiritually dulling, and incitive [sic] to ambition of money, position, power, and other debilitating drives of the American people.[22]

Consultor D:

> What does this film believe itself to be? in other words, I try to take the film on its own grounds and proceed from there, assessing how well the production stays on its own grounds. . . . Hence the second question is the function of the first: Is the film honest to itself perseveringly? Integrity is another way of stating this. Marty, David and Lisa, The Knack had it eminently. . . . Is the production technique coordinated with the theme, consonant with it, adeptly carried out? Some observations: Pretentious production with a vacuous comment--The Collector comes to mind--or camera work and

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[21] Interview with Consultor B, New York City, January 5, 1967.

[22] Interview with Consultor C, New York City, January 8, 1967.

> track focusing on and immersing us in accidentals of sex (Kiss Me, Stupid), of violence (Psycho), of abrasive personalities (The Pumpkin Eater) effect a great dishonesty by capturing the imagination without a concommitant enlightenment. . . . Consequently, for serious film, or for film which seeks to seriously comment, [I ask] is sufficient respect paid to the complexity and ambiguity of the human situation depicted, and is the treatment generally sympathetic to the human being involved? I try not to project an ideology here, but simply to assure myself that honesty is being protected, that the portrayal of vice is attended by respect for the problems it generates as well as the tensions it relaxes. Lost Weekend and Hatful of Rain managed to [do this]. The Balcony and Paris Blues fell short.[23]

Consultor E:

> I tend to give high marks to a film if it somehow rings true; if the experience it gives me relates favorably to my own reflected-upon experience of life; if the characters and situations are identifiable with the way I understand human beings to act, approach problems, experience the conviction of values and disvalues; find solutions; live with the consequences, with the urges and goals that I feel a longing for and experience as somehow within the grasp of men. . . . The subject matter of the film is in a sense secondary.[24]

As a group, the consultors generally are more concerned with theme than treatment, according to their stated preferences and criteria for judging. These views are consonant with, if not derived from, the early Legion stated policy of concern with theme, Pius XII's The Ideal Film, and Fr. Sullivan's own viewpoint on film morality. On the other hand, it seems that the consultors look upon themselves as critics of artistic value as part of the moral worth of films--two aspects that are not as easily disengaged from one another as the early Legion thought. Yet if NCOMP does not separate these aspects of the film, it goes beyond the original mandate of the Legion and the purpose of the Code. This perhaps accounts for the break between NCOMP and the PCA over Virginia Woolf, and the embarrassing ambiguity of NCOMP's stand on The Pawnbroker.

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[23] Interview with Consultor D, New York City, January 12, 1967.

[24] Interview with Consultor E, New York City, January 12, 1967.

Individual Consultor's Ratings on Forty-Eight Sample Films: 1962-1966

The following pages present the private ballots of NCOMP reviewers on 48 films. The format of these pages has been designed for ease of reading and reference. Each film is identified by title and major credits. A summary of each film is presented along with selections from secular critical appraisal to put the NCOMP ballots in a meaningful context.

Each category relevant to the film is listed with the number of reviewers who voted for this category. In many films, all the categories are not represented since only some were voted on by the reviewers. Selected quotations from the private ballots of the reviewers are presented for each relevant category. Where no reason was given or where the reason is already represented by another ballot, no quotation is offered. The full spread of different opinion is, however, represented. Finally, the published reason for the NCOMP rating is presented.

The order followed is by year, beginning with October 1962, to October 1963. Within each year, the order is by category of published rating: three A-IV films, seven B films, and two C films. Within each category, the order is alphabetical. For reference purposes, all sample films are listed in Appendix D.

At the end of these pages of sample films, a discussion of the underlying criteria used by reviewers on these films has been presented.

October 1962-October 1963

DIVORCE - ITALIAN STYLE Rating: A-IV

Directed by Pietro Germi. Produced by Franco Cristaldi. Screenplay by Ennio De Concini, Alfredo Gianetti, and Pietro Germi. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 104 minutes. Language: English dubbed.

Summary

A jaded Sicilian roue, tired of his shrewish wife of 12 years, contrives ineptly to murder her in order to marry his young and nubile cousin. Mastroianni, who plays the Sicilian Baron, seeks to find a lover for his wife in order to commit a crime of passion and get a light sentence. To his surprise, she runs off with the lover. Allowing public opinion to build up in his favor, he finally pursues them and is about to kill them when his intentions are anticipated by the lover's deserted wife. On the scene, he takes the rap and returns some few years later, marries his cousin, and is last seen caressing her on a yacht, while her feet flirt with a young, handsome sailor.

Critics

Indeed, ingenuity is the striking directorial quality one notes in the charmingly smooth, efficient, and flexible flow of the film. . . . Not since Charlie Chaplin's beguiling Verdoux have we seen a deliberate wife killer so elegant and suave, so condescending in his boredom, so thoroughly and pathetically enmeshed in the toils of a woman as Mr. Mastroianni is here. . . . This is one of the funniest pictures the Italians have sent along.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Sept. 18, 1962.

In any case there is humor--a quiverful of barbed arrows aimed unerringly . . . at courtship, marriage, murder, and the family.
- Newsweek, Oct. 1, 1962.

Although, in accepted Italian style, the story and the camera do not hesitate at the door of the bedroom, the farce even with sex added remains at the broadest level.
- J.D. Ivers, Motion Picture Daily, Sept. 18, 1962.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	8	"If it is [morally objectionable in part for all], then all have no sense of humor or perspective about life." "The resolution of story [sic] is amoral, [only] if it is not taken as a spoof." - "Thoroughly delightful and winning business done in impeccable style and taste." "Accepting this film as a bawdy comedy in the Sicilian framework . . . suitable for adults." - "Definitely not for youngsters, of course."
B:	5	"Advocates the easing of divorce laws as a solution to a boring marriage . . . the Church, not the state or social consensus, is set up as the culprit." - "Only because of the Confession scene. . . ." - "The treatment seems to derive amusement in great part from association with religious observances that would offend Catholics." - "There are many instances of vulgar references visually and in dialogue, but they are not unacceptable in such a farcial context as to rate a C." - ". . . casual and comic treatment of adultery and murder. . . . And I think note should be taken of the soliciting and giving of names in confession . . ."*
C:	4	"Condones adultery, pokes fun at family life and certainly mocks the Church." - "Glorifies crime in a

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*In one scene, individual names are used by the penitent to the confessor, who seems to encourage this unnecessary information. Although this practice may well exist in the "hill-billy" setting of Sicily, priests are under strong ecclesiastical censure against doing so and American Catholics would be shocked and offended by such a practice, unless they had travelled widely.

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		cynical way and because of the mockery of religion." -"It does not succeed in doing anything toward a moral resolution or point of view besides humor." - "Based on a warped morality."

The final published rating was A-IV: "A caustic commentary upon manners and morals, this film is a somewhat irreverent satire on Italian marriage legislation. Although the comical and farcial tone of the film removes any serious concern about the moral implications of its theme, the use of religion and religious characters as background in treatment calls for reservation. While the film does not bear the Code Seal of Approval of the Motion Picture Association of America, Embassy Pictures Corporation, its distributor, will advertise the film as 'Recommended for mature audiences.'"

8 1/2 Rating: A-IV

Directed by Federico Fellini, Produced by Angelo Rizzoli. Screenplay by Federico Fellini, Tullio Pinelli, Ennie Flaiano, Brunello Rondi. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 135 minutes. Language: English subtitles.

Summary

A blend of realism, fantasy, satire, philosophy, and farce, the film cannot be summarized. The plot--the least important element--is simple enough. A director (Marcello Mastroianni), successful and in mid-life, has reached a psychological crisis and is at a loss in creating a new movie. He loves both his wife and mistress in different ways, but cannot really communicate with either. He takes a rest cure at a spa and begins work on his new film. Through a series of dreams and visions he finally accepts himself and those around him and is able to begin his new film on a note of hope for humanity.

Critics

. . . certainly ranks among the most brilliant cinema works of our time, an intellectual and artistic exercise of the first rank . . . [but] it is as though we were eavesdropping on the psychoanalysis of a complete stranger--and hearing nothing that makes us care very much about him.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, June 26, 1963.

It has no more plot than a horse race, no more order than a pin ball machine, and it bounces around on several levels of consciousness, dreams and memories as it details rather casually a man's psychoanalysis of himself. But it sets up a labyrinthine ego for the daring and thoughtful to explore, and it harbors some elegant treasures of wit and satire along the way.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, June 26, 1963.

Fellini has taken a personal and most difficult subject, treated it with all the imagination he is capable of, and fashioned a film of the highest distinction.

- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, June 29, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	6	". . . because the whole picture really can't be taken too seriously." - "There is no moral reservation that can be significantly pointed up." - "A private surrealistic . . . [by] one of the most brilliant director-writers of our time."
A-IV:	5	". . . no moral objection . . . but the unusual approach it follows ought to be brought to the attention of the viewers by . . . the A-IV category." - "the ambiguity of the moral theme. . . ." - "[Although] his own life is filled with adultery, drinking, etc. . . . he has [at the end] arrived at a personal truth." - ". . . near brutal honesty . . . not a condemnation of Catholicism, but it is very definitely a scathing condemnation of the narrow and un-Christian attitudes of the clergy. . . a terrible condemnation of a society which degrades persons into sex symbols and then heartlessly rejects them when they are no longer physically appealing."
B:	1	"It has several suggestive sequences and the costuming is offensive."
C:	1	"Not only because of the suggestive dancing and situations, but more especially because I interpret the theme to be anti-Catholic. Fellini is saying 'There is no hope anywhere for anyone.'"

The final published rating was A-IV: "This film is a probing of artistic, psychological, and religious maturity which, moving back and forth between fantasy and reality, is an attempt to reveal the many influences which shape the creative process of a film director. A recognition of the roots of despair leads the director to a reconciliation with self and others through the joyful acceptance of reality."

FREUD Rating: A-IV

Directed by John Huston. Produced by Wolfgang Reinhardt. Screenplay by Charles Kaufman and Wolfgang Reinhardt. Distributed by Universal. 139 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

This partly fictionalized account of Freud's early years as a doctor developing his theories (at 29 in 1885, to 1890) has Montgomery Clift in the title role. Rebuffed by other doctors, Freud impresses at least one man, Dr. Breuer (Larry Parks), who calls him in on a case of hysteria (psychic paralysis, neurosis) that he cannot cure. Freud helps this case (Sussanah York) over a period of years of stormy treatment and blind probing and some mistakes. During the process he realizes his own Oedipus complex and the role of infantile sexuality in his own life. At the end he presents a more developed theory of infantile sexuality, traumas, and the adult unconscious. His public presentation is met with indignation and scorn, but he departs with dignity and conviction. He visits the grave of his father--something he could never before do--and thus exorcises his own personal demons.

Critics

Whether it is viewed as a film biography, a drama of a courageous man breaking new ground, or a special kind of mystery story, [it] is a picture of distinction. . . . Even though Huston has said he did not set out to make a document, the effect of his brilliant direction is documentarian.

- Richard Gertner, Motion Picture Daily, Dec. 13, 1962.

The story is not accurate in detail . . . but it is resolutely true to the spirit of the man and his work. What's more, it is directed with dominating intelligence.

- Time, Dec. 28, 1962.

Despite all these virtues [i.e., acting, dream sequence cinematography] however--"Freud" seldom touches through on any human level. One wonders for whom it was created. For confirmed Freudians, it must inevitably appear an oversimplification, albeit sincere and essentially honest. And for the rest, it is as remote as pure science has always been--mainly because Huston has insisted on holding Freud at arm's length, showing us the mind instead of the man.
- Arthur Knight, Saturday Review, Jan. 5, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	3	"The handling of this delicate matter was in no way offensive. . . . Adolescents might find the matter disturbing, both to their senses and to their minds." "It is just plot number two, man against institution in pseudo-jargon of the trade. However, it is not immoral except in being a pretentious lie."
A-IV:	5	"Since the film is technical for a layman [sic] to evaluate . . ." - ". . . for the professional and serious student." - ". . . we should not submit a rating that by implication at least might seem to sanction [Freud's] theories." - "Many of the gross inaccuracies in regard to Freudian theory are contained in these [off-screen narrations] overblown, ill-advised, and pointless declarations. Absurd generalizations distort Freud's true views and accomplishments. Young Freud would be a happier name for this work." - "Because of the controversial theme and the delicate matter it deals with . . ."

The final published rating was A-IV: "Directed with sensitive restraint and a conspicuous regard for good taste, this motion picture dramatizes the first third of Doctor Freud's professional career. The limits which this film biography has set for itself are legitimate but to the layman would suggest that Freud's thinking never moved beyond the pansexualism emphasized in the film."

IRMA LA DOUCE Rating: B

Directed and produced by Billy Wilder. Screenplay by Billy Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond (from the play by Alexandre Breffort). Distributed by United Artists. 149 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Irma (Shirley MacLaine) is a Parisian streetwalker who meets a virtuous policeman, Nestor Patou (Jack Lemmon), who falls in love with her and wants to marry, but first reform her. Irma insists instead that he become her pimp. To prevent her from continuing her career, Nestor disguises himself as an eccentric English Lord who pays her merely for companionship on the stipulation that she do business with no other. More than companionship results in this farce--Irma gets pregnant (not realizing the Lord's identity) and due to incredible comic complications, Nestor is forced to have the Englishman 'drowned'. He is accused of murder. A last minute denouement untangles him from the law and he weds Irma--wildly slapstick and farcical.

Critics

Considering the nature of the material and the reputation of the stage play, it will amaze many to discover that the film is never lewd. This is because the Wilder approach is satirical, and he is not a man given to the leer. . . . Adult audiences are in for an evening of rare pleasure.

- Richard Gertner, Motion Picture Daily, June 5, 1963.

But the major thing [the script achieves] is to force the essential good humor and innocence of a spoof--a travesty of the legend of the Parisian apache and his girl. [Jack Lemmon's] magnificently keen and agile clowning is what really carries this film.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, June 6, 1963.

Mr. Wilder has himself a one-joke movie and stretches the joke out for two hours and twenty minutes. . . . The double entendres are as forthright as they are ultimately dull.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, June 6, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	3	"Given the comic premise of the film, the milieu in which it is developed, and the conclusion it draws based on the hero's desires [to reform Irma]," - "I doubt that any mature adult would find this picture salacious."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	8	"Situations, costumes, dialogue are all questionable." "the burlesque atmosphere . . ." - "The treatment of the prostitute's life was cavalier and no effort was made to show its seamier side." - ". . . changes from a farcical defense of prostitution to what appears to be, in a few parts of the film, a serious defense of immorality." - "flagrant costuming . . . rather lewd jokes." - "Irma fails because they succeed in making everything funny but prostitution."
C:	11	"The costuming is more than suggestive; the dialogue is composed and spoken with the intention of sexually arousing the viewer; the situations could not be more immorally clear." ". . . classify it as the dirty joke it is, laughing at all that is pure and chaste and praising all that is impure." "The opening scenes are so crass in the portrayal of sex for hire and the closing scene is such a slap at marriage and the ceremony of marriage . . ." - "Sin and immorality are treated as farces and as ridiculous." - "Prostitution is blatantly enhanced to the level of a comical, acceptable, even though off-beat profession."

The final published rating was B: "Based on a stage production of the same title, this comedy is concerned with the subject of prostitution. In developing its story of the redemption of one particular prostitute, the film so concentrates on the details of prostitution and upon suggestiveness in costuming, dialogue and situations that it fails as comedy and, as a consequence, tends to be a coarse mockery of virtue."

A KIND OF LOVING   Rating: B

Directed by John Schlesinger. Produced by Joseph Janni. Screenplay by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse (adapted from novel by Stan Barstow). Distributed by Anglo Amalgamated Film. 112 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A Lancashire factory town provides the working-class setting for this unhappy marriage between Vic Brown (Alan Bates) and Ingrid Rothwell

(June Ritchie). Not in love with her, he married her because of a pregnancy he caused. Although Ingrid loves Vic, their home, shared with her narrow and possessive mother, makes life unbearable for all three. She loses the baby but is saved herself. Vic realizes he needn't have married her after all, but he sees her solid virtues and realizes also there is no perfect mate. He decides to stay with her and find a home for them away from her mother, where they may discover a kind of loving.

Critics

While a great deal of truthfulness and candor are put forth in these deliberate scenes of physical and emotional conflict, to the extent that some of them may be slightly shocking to youngsters, the tone is never sensational. A strong sense of seriousness and pathos runs all the way through the film. And the sobering notion that young people must be prepared to accept responsibility when they start playing seriously with romance is the evolving theme.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Oct. 2, 1962.

Yet, this is no ordinary movie stuff, mainly because it is played and filmed with the most rigourous belief on everyone's part in the story's reality. It is all painfully, poignantly alive and true. Every detail of background and performance has the right ring.
- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, Oct. 20, 1962.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-II:	1	"Socially responsible, psychologically astute, and dramatically valid, this is a film which every teenager should see."
A-III:	5	"Whereas it would possibly do the most good if it were shown to teenagers, the question arises, will it also prove suggestive to them? . . . it should be restricted to audiences of 18 years of age or over." - "There was a very positive point registered by the sister of the 'hero' when she told him it was his choice." - "[Highly moral but] despite the delicate treatment might prove to be overly stimulating to unstable teenagers. . . ."
A-IV:	2	"While some scenes appeared to be 'daring', I felt that they were an integral part of the picture." - "There are, I believe, many good and intelligent

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		adults who would find the longish treatment of the fornication sequence, in dialogue and in visual presentation, too explicit and strong for them--definitely not their cup of tea."
B:	3	"About six scenes are, to my mind, absolutely intolerable." "The dialogue and situations were so terribly indecent . . ." "Indecent treatment."

The final published rating was B: "The theme of this film is a moral and sociological valuable statement concerning premarital sex. Unfortunately, however, the visual realism of the film's treatment frequently exceeds the bounds of ordinary decency expected in a mass medium of entertainment."

OF LOVE AND DESIRE Rating: B

Directed by Richard Rush. Produced by Victor Stoloff. Screenplay by Richard Rush and Laslo Gorog (From a story by Victor Stoloff and Jacqueline Delessert). Distributed by 20th Century-Fox. 97 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A triangle among Merle Oberon, who plays a nymphomaniac, Kurt Jurgens, her half-brother who unconsciously loves her incestuously, and Steve Cochran, a house guest at their sumptuous estate in Mexico, who genuinely falls in love with her after many mutual trips to bed. Jurgens tries to break up the romance and when she finds out the real reason for it, she is horrified and flees. Cochran finds her and all is well--it is intimated that their love will cure her nymphomania, caused by the death in war of her first love.

Critics

It is a picture of strong dramatic ingredients, beautifully composed from the production standpoint . . . and containing ingredients which give it every chance to register substantially. Although the theme is adult, the treatment thereof is careful and in good taste.
- Charles S. Aaronson, Motion Picture Daily, Aug. 27, 1963.

It's a silly, soapy little pseudo-adult film. . . .
- Judith Crist, *The New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 12, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	7	"While this film seemed to me extremely awkward and inept . . . It is obviously not at all a question of the director's approving of Miss Oberon's affairs, quite the opposite." "No one could accuse the movie of being visually or mentally stimulating, sexually or otherwise." - ". . . an honest attempt to avoid the sensational . . . Her nymphomania was never made to seem appealing."
A-IV:	3	"For those who depend on films for their philosophy of life, *Of Love and Desire* can do a great deal of good. The thematic movement . . . is from illness to cure, from chaos to order, from desire to love. . . . These relations occasionally flare up in some rather torrid scenes." - "Delicate handling of a mature theme such as nymphomania . . . demands at least the mildest suggestion that we are dealing with someone . . . requiring the attention of medical and psychiatric skills. [And the film fails to do this.]"
B:	11	"It is unrealistic, for with all the moral dissipations of illicit sex going on, everyone concerned seems as fresh and as clean as a daisy!" - "Though [Steve Cochran's] actions are blatantly immoral by Christian standards, he appears almost heroic." - ". . . full approval to open and casual promiscuity." "suggestive costuming." - "A glamorized version of a clinical case . . ."
C:	9	"This film is so outrageously contrived and dramatically unforgiveable that it has no other effect, than the portrayal of sordid bedroom activity." - ". . . completely amoral . . ." "Glamorizes and condones illicit love and maturish [sic] junk with no moral point." - "What are we to think of a hero who, knowing that Katherine is an emotional invalid, proceeds at once to assault her in just the area of her greatest vulnerability?"

The final published rating was B: "This film, whose subject matter deals with various sexual aberrations, in theme lacks a strong voice of morality and in treatment is excessively sensual."

SHOCK CORRIDOR Rating: B

Directed by Samuel Fuller. Produced by Samuel Fuller. Screenplay by Samuel Fuller. Distributed by Allied Artists. 101 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

To solve a murder witnessed only by insane asylum inmates, a reporter (Peter Breck) expertly fakes psychosis and is committed. His inner and outer torment (he is attacked by psychotic nymphomaniacs) drive him to catatonic schizophrenia, although he does solve the murder. Along the way, vignettes of a deluded Negro, a brainwashed Korean veteran, and a nuclear physicist regressed to childhood are presented.

Critics

A Negro supposed to have been the first to attend an all white Southern university serves to make the point that it takes enormous emotional stamina to play the role of martyr in social progress. . . . But all these points go for nought because the film is dominated by sex and shock superficialities.
- Variety, July 10, 1963.

. . . a script containing a considerable amount of excellent writing, it is directed with driving power throughout, and it is effectively produced in nearly all of its sequences.
- Raymond Levy, Motion Picture Daily, July 8, 1963.

"Shock Corridor" hasn't got the decency to qualify as a lower B-level film. It's coated with sexual jargon, psychiatric and political palaver and pathetic photographic effects . . .--but nothing can hide the film's infantile pretensions and drooling preoccupation with sensation.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 12, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"Because of this [sex sequences] and because of the fact

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		that a presumably respectable doctor (significantly, he's Japanese) helps our hero to perpetrate what is certainly an unethical bit of trickery, I would classify this film A-III."
C:	2	"Everything in this film seemed 'calculated' to get as much forbidden material on the screen as possible." - ". . . preoccupation with abnormal and excessive sexual points. . . ."

The final published rating was B: "Sensational subject matter and treatment are so predominant in this film that any purported social message is completely lost."

SODOM AND GOMORRAH Rating: B

Directed by Robert Aldrich. Produced by Goffredo Lombardo (with participation from Joseph E. Levine). Screenplay by Hugo Butler and Giorgio Prosperi. Distributed by 20th Century-Fox. 153 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Lot, the leader of a band of Hebrew pilgrims to Jordan Valley, sets up camp between the Helamites and the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, ruthlessly ruled by Queen Bera (Anouk Aimee). To protect herself from the hostility of the Helamites, Bera offers Lot (Stewart Granger) territory in the valley and seals the bargain by giving him for wife Ildith, her favorite slave girl. Bera's brother, Astaroth (Stanley Baker) plots in league with the Helamites to overthrow his sister. Shuch, Lot's daughter, falls in love with Astoroth who brutally rapes her. The Hebrews defeat an attack by the Helamites, who resent their protective role toward Sodom and Gomorrah. Moving into Sodom, the Hebrews are corrupted; Lot kills Astoroth in revenge at his double dealing. Realizing his guilt, and the corruption of his people, Lot leads them out of Sodom as God sends a sign by destroying the corrupt cities.

Critics

There is much to sell in this picture: the biblical story, the elaborate spectacle in exciting color, the battle sequences, the costuming,

and the thunderous destruction of the wicked cities, all adding up to big entertainment for the mass of patrons.
- Charles S. Aaronson, Motion Picture Daily, Jan. 28, 1963.

. . . Aldrich has done everything to insure brisk wicket biz. The title is provocative, the stellar names attractive, and Aldrich has flung in plenty of incident and some stirring special effects.
- Variety, Dec. 5, 1962.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	". . . many scenes of torture, cruelty, lewd dancing, and Lesbianism--none of which should bother mature adults and none of it presented in a favorable light."
B:	6	"Subtle references to perversion coupled with some highly erotic dance sequences and suggestive costumes." "I feel like I'm being treated to the same sadism as the Roman spectator in the Circus. . . . The milk bath, jewel-in-the-navel stuff should not be presented as approved just because God shows up at the end for his licks." - "The general tone was completely devoid of any overriding sense of faith . . . tasteless display." . . . "excessive brutality" . . . "A mess of cliches." - "Uses the bible merely for a spear and sandal spectacle with spicy title."
C:	2	"Shows the corruption of two cities . . . at too great length and with too loving care . . . certainly not for youngsters." - "Its purpose: . . . to glorify sin."

The final published rating was B: "The Old Testament biblical story of Lot and his wife is presented against the pagan and demoralizing background of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. While granting the validity of the theme, the treatment resorts to excessive sensuality in costuming, dancing and situations. These negative elements tend to destroy the spiritual value of the film."

THE STRIPPER **Rating: B**

Directed by Franklin Schaffner, Produced by Jerry Wald. Screenplay by

Meade Roberts (from the play by William Inge, A Loss of Roses). Distributed by 20th Century-Fox. 95 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Joanne Woodward plays an unsuccessful stripper who, between sordid bookings provided by a brutal manager, rooms in a small Kansas town with a widow and her post-teen son. The boy (Richard Beymer), who is trying to replace his dead father in his mother's affections, disappoints her by his lack of interest in college or job. He falls for the stripper, some years his senior, but abandons her when he realizes how different they are. The stripper is a pathetic creature of broken hopes and petty fears. The boy's loss of interest is one more blow. But the affair frees him from his neurotic attachment to his mother.

Critics

[Miss Woodward] makes this basically cliched character, this latest variation on the heart-of-gold victim-of-a-wicked-world creature, so very real from time to time that the pointless plot, the routine mechanics and the subsidiary characters become increasingly stereotyped.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, June 20, 1963.

Not a stitch of dramatic respectability covers its rickity bones.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, June 20, 1963.

. . . an unsuccessful attempt to convert . . . A Loss of Roses, a Broadway flop, into a substantial and appealing picture. Truth of the matter is, it had more substance, solidity and sensitivity as a play.
- Variety, April 24, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-II:	1	"The seamy side of the plot emphasizes the importance of moral living."
A-III:	3	"All the values turn out right in the end--but the whipping scene, the striptease, . . . general tone is not very elevating."
B:	3	"The dignity of the human being is outraged." - "The overall effect is deadening on the spirit of man." - "suggestive costuming . . . sadism."

The final published rating was B: "This film, sensational both in title and advertising, is offensive by reason of highly suggestive costuming and situations."

LA VIACCIA Rating: B

Directed by Mauro Bolognini. Produced by Alfredo Bini. Screenplay by Vasco Pratolini, Pasquale Festa Campanile and Massimo Franciosa (From novel--The Inheritance by Mario Pratesi). Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 103 minutes. Language: English subtitles.

Summary

About a mean-spirited family who are so concerned with working the farm and making money that they haven't any time for the human virtues. When the grandfather dies, the sons squabble over the farm, and the grandson (Jean-Paul Belmondo) goes off to work in his uncle's wineshop in Florence. The grandson has to steal from his uncle to pay for a beautiful and heartless prostitute (Claudia Cardinale) whom he loves madly. This leads to his getting a new job as bouncer in his girl's brothel. His job leads to jealousy, trouble with his family, and, in the end, a brothel brawl in which he is knifed. Abandoned by the prostitute and unwanted at the farm, which has passed to the wine merchant's son, Belmondo dies. The wine merchant's mistress then takes the farm over from the son.

Critics

It is a harsh slice of life, well produced and well performed, which should prove effective for adult devotees of foreign films.
- Motion Picture Daily, Sept. 24, 1962.

Set in the 1880's, apparently great effort was devoted to recreating the period, caught graphically by Lionida Barboni's camera.
- Film Daily, Sept. 24, 1962.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	4	"I found the theme rather sordid, and I thought the treatment did not particularly redeem it by any

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		valuable insights or felicity of statement. Still . . . not an occasion of sin for a discriminating adult. [But he would] waste time on it." - "There are many positive values . . . the evil consequences of loose living."
A-IV:	1	No reason given.
B:	2	"[A good film in general but] the bordello scenes, top-heavy here in relation to the entire story, can and do fan temptation." - ". . . costuming [might be] suggestive for a lot of people."
B or C:	1	"I do not think a brothel is proper subject matter for a film."
C:	1	"The pagan self-centeredness which emanates from almost every character in regards [sic] to sex, charity, and religion."

The final published rating was B: "Largely developing its story in the vulgar and suggestive setting of a brothel, this film tends to resolve its theme on a note of hopelessness and despair."

THE BALCONY Rating: C

Directed by Joseph Strick. Produced by Joseph Strick and Ben Maddow. Screenplay by Bernard Frechtman (from the play by Jean Genet). Distributed by Continental. 84 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A play from the theatre of the absurd, whose plot is not as important as the setting and the dialogue: The set is a brothel called a "house of illusion" where people come to act out their erotic fantasies. The madame (Shelley Winters), her lesbian lover and bookkeeper (Lee Grant), and the police chief (Peter Falk) run the establishment for three special customers: a gas company employee who dresses as a bishop and has a 'penitent', a milkman who wears a general's uniform and has his 'horse', and an accountant who dons the robes of a chief justice and alternately beats and licks the shoes of a third prostitute. The house of illusion stands for the power elite and their methods of wielding power. A revolution is taking place outside and the police chief decides to send out the 'bishop', 'general', and 'judge' to pacify the people. The police chief gives a super-chauvinistic speech and finally the leader of the rebels comes to the house of illusion to act out his own fantasy--being police chief. Commentators believe Genet is saying there is only greed for power, no love, and that the whole world is a house of illusion.

Critics

The [film adaptation] plot, stripped of its metaphorical functions, emerges as farce. . . . The film is a great impertinence.
- Newsweek, April 1, 1963.

Too often, unhappily, the film is cute where the play was poetic, too often Director Joseph Strick permits his performers to natter what they are intended to intone. But moments of lurid lyricism survive and vestiges of atavistic ritual.
- Time, March 29, 1963.

If we keep getting these [i.e., The Balcony and The Connection] bilious attitudes toward life, sophomoric exercises in absurdity and despair, acting that is so serious as to be boring, and film-making that, in its sum-total, is crude, we will have neither original American movies nor an audience to support them.
- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, March 30, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	". . . disappointing in its lack of intensity. . . . It is nevertheless a moderately successful satirization of the vanity of the flesh, harmless enough for all but the most prurient."
A-IV:	2	"Genet is considered a writer of first importance. While he concentrates on evil, he does not advocate it as a way of life--but says that this is the way people are. It is not like so many American films that gloss over sins and are casual about immorality. The Balcony may be disturbing, but the viewer knows where he stands . . . he is not being sold a bill of goods." - "The objectionable part of this movie is

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		its locale (a brothel) and everything that comes with it (perversion, over-exposed bosoms, tawdry language, etc.). [But] unfortunately [sic] the film has its artistic moments."
B:	2	"The philosophy behind this picture is worse than pagan--it seems to be saying [that] the only thing worthwhile, permanent, enduring, is whoring." - "The concept that 'world equals brothel' is simply too naive to merit serious consideration. [Thus] the suggestiveness and sexual perversion--which might legitimately be investigated in a more responsible handling of the theme--are totally without justification and relevance."
C:	9	"If everything is an illusion as [Genet] says, then immorality itself [including the hypocrisy he satirizes] is an illusion and prostitution does not exist. . . . In which case there is not even the slightest hint to justify the existence of the film. The strongest impression is only the visual sensual display . . . and the erotic . . ." "The sense of objective morality is completely negated in this film." - "Because of its setting, characters, plot, and costuming . . ." - "A constant scene of immorality, blasphemy, and sordidness . . . inept." - "The theme is basically anti-Christian." - "It presents our standard social systems today as essentially hypocritical, thoroughly rotten through and through." - "The visuals, though to some degree justified by the theme, are too sensational for the medium of the popular film."

The final published rating was C: "An obscene and blasphemous excursion into the world of perversion, this film offers its audience a dark exercise in evil for its own sake. In commenting on the meaning and values of life, the film-maker espouses a cynical philosophy of hopelessness, absurdity and pessimism. As an enticement for prurient interest the film's treatment highlights gross suggestiveness in costuming, dialogue, and situations.

It is to be noted that although the film is an American production, it does not bear the seal of approval of the Production Code Administration."

PHAEDRA Rating: C

Directed and Produced by Jules Dassin. Screenplay by Jules Dassin and Margarita Liberaki. Distributed by Lopert Pictures. 115 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A modern retelling of the ancient myth of Phaedra and her stepson Hippolytus. Melina Mercouri plays the modern Phaedra with Tony Perkins as her stepson. Raf Vallone, a billionaire Greek shipbuilder, is the latter-day Theseus. Estranged from his son, Vallone dispatches his second wife, Mercouri, to London to persuade his son to return to him and Greece. She falls in lust with him and seduces him in Paris on the way to Greece. Perkins is a callow victim, who genuinely comes to love his father. When he refuses to join Mercouri in abandoning the father, she tells Vallone what they have been doing on the same day that he learns one of his ships, Phaedra, has gone down with all hands. There is a stormy confrontation of father and son, with both hearts broken. Perkins flees, hysterical, and crashes his Aston-Martin into the sea.

Critics

Phaedra seduces Alexis [her stepson] in one of the most successful sequences of sexual passion ever recorded on film. Neither coy nor flatfootedly realistic, Dassin's cameras move from the fire in a fireplace to the rain coming down the window, and then turn the water to the work of distorting and refracting the act of love.
- Newsweek, Oct. 29, 1962.

As the characters have no discretion, so Dassin gives no evidence of taste, which from a dramatic standpoint probably isn't as important as his curious lack of judgment. . . . No matter how he has vulgarized, simplified, and cretinized his characters, the result is . . . drab, glum, embarrassingly slow and, despite the obvious intention, no more shocking than a botanical treatise.
- Paul V. Beckley, The New York Herald Tribune, Oct. 19, 1962.

Dassin's black-and-white photography, like his direction, is lean and fluid. Only Perkins seems too Ivy to wear Greek laurels, too shrill to be quite convincing at the moment of his terrible doom. The film is full of symbolism, rich in parallels to the original Phaedra myth. . . .
- Time, Oct. 26, 1962.

It seems simply incredible that the mature sophisticated woman would find herself in a physical involvement with one so nervous and callow (as Mr. Perkins is made to appear in this film). And while Mr. Dassin has mounted and photographed this tragedy with great polish, it for the most part strikes one as synthetic, particularly when a ship named SS. Phaedra goes down with the loss of all hands, a happening meant to be overwhelmingly symbolic.

- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, Nov. 3, 1962.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	6	". . . directed . . . in highly good taste." - "No condonation of evil is found in the film." - "[The love scene] is given a surrealistic presentation which is more symbolic of love and lust than realistic." - "In general, it is a powerful attack against those who seek wealth and social strength at the cost of personal love and happiness."
A-IV:	2	"A powerful work of art, somewhat marred artistically and morally." - "How on earth could a film like this ever be classified as containing any of the elements of entertainment?"
B:	16	". . . only for the one sequence in the apartment in Paris." "suggestive situation" - "Seduction scene-portrayal is much too suggestive." - "Suicide seems to be accepted as the natural outcome of this illicit affair." - "The general attitude toward marriage fidelity throughout the picture seems unChristian [sic- !]" - "There appeared to be a Lesbian relationship between Phaedra and her maid." "This modern adaptation of the Greek tragedy is a well-handled and quite tasteful rendering in the cinema medium. But the theme is definitely slanted toward the adult mind." NOTE: The reviewer seems to think B = A-III. "For us, what the Greeks and the seventeenth-century tragic audiences could grasp all too well, must be spelled out with the cold, inexorable doggedness of the camera lens. . . . [Although a fine adaptation] we do not have to approve of the lengths to which Dassin must go to prove his point." ". . . the seduction [scene in Paris] was indecent, unnecessary, and unfaithful to the Euripidean tragedy." - "Dramatically valid, but just not suitable for the motion picture as

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		a mass medium." - "The obsession of Alex with the car seems almost a fetish and has morbid overtones."
C:	6	"This [Paris seduction] scene--for all its conscious and evident attempt at artistry--has, it seems to me, as its dominant purpose to appeal to the prurient interest of the average moviegoer." - "I cannot condone a plot whose essential theme is one of incestuous incidents." "The whole appeal and constant stress of the picture (over and above the element of tragedy) on the sex factor, [including] morbidity of Alex's love for the automobile."

The final published rating was C: "This film, reputedly derived from a Greek tragedy but alien to the classic spirit of its origins, is presented in a modern setting. Judged on this ground, the film attempts to elicit audience sympathy for the immoral behaviour and character of its heroine, Phaedra. Furthermore, the treatment of the subject matter contains totally unnecessary suggestive sequences. Note: This picture does not bear the Code Seal of Approval of the Motion Picture Association of America."

October 1963-October 1964

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA Rating: A-IV

Directed by John Huston. Produced by Ray Stark. Screenplay by Anthony Veiller and John Huston (from Tennessee Williams' play). Distributed by MGM. 120 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

The iguana lizard is a delicacy favored by some Mexicans. They keep one tethered and alive and feed him until properly plump for killing. Outside of a sleazy hotel in Mexico there is an iguana tethered, symbol of the humans in this play, captive to their lost hopes and empty desires. The hotel is run by a coarse widow with nymphomaniacal drives (Ava Gardner). Richard Burton plays a defrocked and desperate babes-to-booze minister, now reduced as tourist guide for a bourgeois flock of Baptist ladies. Among them is Sue Lyon, out of place as a teenie-bopper nymphet, squired by a crypto-lesbian, Grayson Hall. Deborah Kerr plays an impoverished spinster who cares for her ancient poet-father. Lonely, she is generous and pure. Somehow, the varied characters of these women give a dim reprieve to the minister's broken faith in himself, humanity, and God.

Critics

Certainly, in restructuring the play for the screen Anthony Veiller and John Huston have given it a profile and clarity not evident in a reading of the text. . . . What does remain, however, is Williams' haunting sense of a group of people who have reached the end of the line--figuratively for Shannon, for Maxine, the hot-blooded hotelkeeper who realizes that she has flung her life away in lust, and for Hannah, who knows that hers has been wasted through devotion to her nonagenarian father; and quite literally for the father, who pours his frail remaining strength into the completion of a poem. What remains also is Williams' rage against what he terms "man's inhumanity to God"--the needless cruelties and hurts that men inflict on all creatures, themselves included. And finally, there is the core of the play itself, the groping toward love as the path to self-realization and salvation. . . . Performances are on such a uniformly high level that it would be not only unfair but impossible to single out any of the stars . . ."

- Arthur Knight, *Saturday Review*, July 18, 1964.

"The Night of the Iguana" is that fine rarity, an improvement on the play.

- *Newsweek*, July 13, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-II:	1	"Williams is telling us to practice at least two Christian teachings: don't judge or throw stones, and hate the sin but love the sinner. . . . This film is a powerful sermon, and the sooner adolescents and adults can appreciate the beauty of being tolerant and scholarly, the better."
A-III:	22	"The adolescent is not sufficiently prepared for most of Williams, although the lyrical quality of his characters' speeches tempts a teacher of drama and poetry to invite his more mature students of this age to the presentation." "A meaningful concern by someone *involved*." ". . . the bald

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		language, the characterizations, and the conclusion the picture draws are not suitable for the maturing adolescent." - "Although too much for adolescents . . . in discussing the problems of fear and despair in human life it, indirectly, (but deliberately) makes a powerful appeal for charity among men." "If I got its message correctly, Mr. Williams was telling us that people need each other, sex is not dirty and we must have compassion. Most of us suspected that these were true. . . . The film's attitude toward extramarital sexual relations was rather casual. But it does no more than reflect attitudes that are widespread today and I do not think we can say that it advocates or excuses them." - "The whole theme of moral degeneracy puts this movie in the adult category."
A-IV:	19	"Although I think it would be prudish and dishonest in [the main characters'] dramatic position thus far to resolve their problems by saying 'let's get married' . . . I'd rate the film A-IV." - "Are the subjects here treated worthy of mass media? Yes . . . The question lies in the treatment. [The general audience may] enlarge the individuals to general types (Episcopalian ministers, teachers in female Baptist colleges, etc.) . . . good for the individuals who fit into the A-IV category of adults." - "The conclusion seemed morally ambiguous . . . maturity required for a proper moral appreciation of the film . . ." - "Lesbianism, fetishism, etc., are not introduced for prurient interest nor are they out of proportion to the depth and probing for moral decency and goodness among human beings struggling to find ultimate answers." - "It seems to be fundamentally moral and to stand for human dignity. . . . But its morality is clouded by a kind of fatalism, an absence of effective grace. A Christian must answer, 'Yes, but -'."
B:	10	". . . centered around the transgressions of a minister. Neither extolling his resistive efforts nor spinning a yarn to conclude in moral retribution. On this fact I would consider the theme an immoral one." - ". . . great stress on impure sex to the point that could easily arouse the passions of the viewer." - "The story was essentially immoral." - ". . . some of the philosophical and religious beliefs expressed by Burton and Kerr [were morally objectionable]." - "Condones illicit sexual experiences as defense mechanisms for human frailty."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
C:	1	"My impression is that the viewer would be likely to take [the view that the film justifies immoral behaviour] particularly with Miss Kerr's comment . . . 'nothing human disgusts me'."

The final published rating was A-IV: "This film version of Tennessee Williams' play of the same title is a complex parable about human nature. Basically it develops the theme of the liberating influence of love in the anguished life of man. Although the author's cogent indictment of uncharitableness in its many forms provides a prologue for hopeful living, the viewer with religious commitment must nevertheless observe that the romantic naturalism which appears so largely to color the playwright's vision is ultimately illusory in its promise and must finally disappoint those who hail it as a universal panacea. Concerning treatment it is necessary to note that some of the dialogue and a few situations appear to be needlessly coarse and crude.

TOM JONES — Rating: A-IV

Directed by Tony Richardson. Produced by Tony Richardson. Screenplay by John Osborne (from novel by Henry Fielding). Distributed by Lopert Pictures Corp. 131 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Albert Finney plays Tom Jones, a bastard raised and cherished by Squire Allworthy as his own son. In love with Sophie Western (Sussanah York) the daughter of lusty and bawdy Squire Western, Tom's hopes are shattered when Squire Allworthy dies and his priggish nephew Blifil (David Warner) inherits the estate and sends Tom packing to seek his fortune in London. After a series of slapstick adventures, sexy and swashbuckling, Tom is delivered from a last minute unjust execution by Squire Western who discovered that Tom was the bastard son of Allworthy's sister and not of the chambermaid. Tom thus returns to fortune, to the Allworthy estate, and to Sophie. All manner of cinematic tricks from handheld cameras to stop-action are employed in this well-edited film.

Critics

"Tom Jones" is over two hours long but the time goes tumbling by, so exuberant is the narrative. Richardson must have directed the film with a bullwhip for it is fairly bursting with vitality and humor. It is not to be missed.

- William Peper, The New York World-Telegram and Sun, Oct. 8, 1963.

Seldom has the playful nonsense and ineffable tenderness of young love been captured to sweeter (and less cloying) effect than in the courtship scenes between Tom and lovely Sophie Western. And with no disruption of the overall brawling fun of the film we are allowed a clear view of Tom's deep loyalty to his foster-father and our own moment of feeling when he leaves the home he loves to make his way in the world.

- Judith Crist, The Herald Tribune New York Magazine, Oct. 20, 1963.

In finding a means of cinema expression in which to convey most suitably to our age the deceptively fastidious rhetoric and ribald wit of the Fielding work [Richardson and Osborne] have worked out a structure and a rhythm that constitute a major creative achievement in themselves. . . . Perhaps there will be those who will be embarrassed by so much bawdiness on the screen. But I find it too funny to be tasteless, too true to be artistically false.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Oct. 8, 1963.

. . . as clearly a cinematic masterpiece as it is a brawling, bawdy, lusty representation of . . . [the] novel.

- Archer Winsten, The New York Post, Oct. 8, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	7	"Tom Jones embodies well the virtues--one of which is the satirical depiction of gross vices--of the first and greatest of English picaresque classics. This is not a picture for those with weak stomachs or immature minds." "It has color, style, humor, gaity and social comment. [But] some of the costuming and situations . . . totter on a thin line between low comedy and good taste." - "Costuming a bit too heady for the teenager's palate."
B:	3	"The illicit love affairs are portrayed as something quite insignificant." - ". . . though it is a farce and highly stylized, that does not excuse the take-what-you-can-get attitude of the hero." - "Whether

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		the film is an honest screen version of the novel or a pitch for the prurient trade is a debatable question. Most of the male characters are cruel, hypocritical, or gluttonous, and the females, wanton."

The final published rating was A-IV: "Based on Henry Fielding's classic novel of the same title, this film is an earthy comedy-satire about manners and morals in 18th Century England. Although the film may appear frequently coarse, it is saved from being offensive by reason of its fast paced and exceptional comic treatment and its honest portrayal of the period."

Note: William H. Mooring's Film and TV Feature Service, used by Catholic newspapers, disagreed with the Legion: "I beg to differ with the Legion's critique. It may be funny by virtue of treatment. In important detail, it is also filthy." (October 18, 1963) Mooring granted that the film was brilliant cinema and contained brilliant acting. For him this made it all the more pernicious. Many Catholics agreed and NCOMP was bombarded with Catholic criticism in personal letters and in newsprint. Some letter excerpts: "Just what makes an adult ready for such filth . . . it was the most filthy piece of film we have ever seen . . ." - "either re-rate 'Tom Jones' or re-rate the person or persons who originally reviewed it." - "Never again will I respect your twisted moral classification . . . Please be good enough to offer me some explanation of your reasoning without the usual double-talk. . . ." - "It will be to your everlasting shame that you gave your approval to the picture TOM JONES without changing the name of your organization . . . to the Legion of the Propagation of Pornography." (Letters from NCOMP files.)

THE SERVANT Rating: A-IV

Directed by Joseph Losey. Produced by Joseph Losey and Norman Priggen. Screenplay by Harold Pinter (from story by Robin Maugham). Distributed by The Landau Co. 115 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A rich and spoiled young bachelor played by James Fox builds a sumptuous town house for himself and engages an apparently flawless gentleman's gentleman named Barrett (Dirk Bogarde) to run his household and meet his needs. Despite his arrogance young Tony finds Barrett indispensable in meeting his self-indulgent and capricious needs. Tony's girl senses that Barrett is subtly gaining control over Tony's life as well as routine and strives to have Tony fire him. Barrett imports his depraved mistress as a maid in the pretense that she is his sister. She seduces Tony and hopelessly compromises him. Cut off from his fiance, Tony cuts himself off from the outside world and lives a life of infantile sexuality and general depravity under the tutelege of Barrett, who has gained a Satanic domination over his soul. The film ends at a tired and jaded orgy of sexual tedium with Barrett violently kissing Tony's fiance, whose last attempt to pry Tony loose ends in failure and moral degradation. Tony is lost.

Critics

Probably the most terrifying motion picture ever seen . . . so emotionally upsetting and fraught with a strange and chilling fear . . . darkly reflective of a creeping sickness in a society that seems sheltered and secure. . . .
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Sunday Times, March 29, 1964.

"The Servant" simply stands as a story of corruption--and it is a story told in brilliant cinematic terms. Some may find it 'sick' in its negativism, its concentration on the sensuous and erotic for its own sake--but I defy anyone to deny its fascination.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, March 17, 1964.

One is forced to wonder: if Pinter and Losey really came out and made clear what their movie, brilliantly enacted as it is, was all about, would we be as engrossed by it? My own nagging suspicion is that there is something of a trick involved here, a deliberate obfuscation for no good purpose.
- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, March 14, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"I'm not sure I know what judgment to make when a film assaults our moral sensibilities but does so with honesty and within a sound framework of moral judgment. I think this is morally legitimate although it can also be aesthetically offensive."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-IV:	5	". . . the picture was trying to say that anyone, servant or master, who is self centered and selfish will end up as a slave to corruption . . . [The theme] would be missed by the average audience . . . then some of the scenes could be considered suggestive because they are not in a proper context." - ". . . meaning for the discriminating adult." "A non-Christian LA DOLCE VITA . . . "
B:	1	"A good study of the decadence of the upper class English society, and the attempt to live in the unreal world of the past. . . . However, the overemphasis on sex and the rather graphic erotic scenes invalidate the picture as a whole."

The final published rating was A-IV: "A cinematically brilliant examination of the corrupting power of an evil character, this film requires certain reservations; its portrait of human corruptibility may be overdrawn, and for some its treatment would be occasionally shocking."

THE AMERICANIZATION OF EMILY Rating: B

Directed by Arthur Hiller. Produced by Martin Ransohoff. Screenplay by Paddy Chayefsky (from William Bradford Huie's novel). Distributed by MGM. 117 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Julie Andrews plays an English girl in the British ATS in London during World War II. James Garner a young naval attache of a schizophrenic American admiral whose main concern is that the Navy get good public relations mileage out of D-Day. Garner is an avowed coward who hates all war and the pathetic heroism it feeds on and produces. His job as attache is general procurer for Allied officers in London. Andrews, who lost her father in the war, is shocked at Garner's views. Due to the madness of the Admiral, Garner is sent in as the first man on the beach in D-Day, with the hope that he will be killed and photographed and become the 'Unknown Sailor'. By a mischance he survives and is declared a hero. This experience makes Emily (Andrews) come partially to the view of Garner. In the end, all viewpoints are seen to be incorrect, from the vainglorious and mad Admiral's, to the patriotism of Emily, to the cynical cowardice of Gardner. But Gardner seems less wrong than others in this anti-war movie.

Critics

Sarcasm laces through it like fumes of acid . . . and boisterously ribald situations bespeak tensions that are solemn and sad. It is a fiercely funny picture in which the supporting cast of James Coburn, Melvyn Douglas, Joyce Grenfell and others also excel. . . . And what it says is tart and profound.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Nov. 8, 1964.

What slightly blunts the film's attack is its uncertainty whether to play for cynical laughs, or dead straight. It does both, so that what should purge us of sentimental notions about war sometimes comes over like a painful knock at real heroism. And its last half-minute is a sad sell-out.
- Alexander Walker, Evening Standard, London, England, April 4, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"The overall impression is not that cowardice pays. The film questions the traditional value system . . . and then leaves you with no answer."
B:	5	"A hazily presented philosophy of war and virtue is perhaps its overall theme, but it, as well as the talents of many people, are all lost in a maze: nudity, suggestiveness, dialogue, pagan code of morality render the picture objectionable." "I find it most distasteful to see Miss Julie Andrews going to bed with even so appealing a coward as James Garner. The easy acceptance of divorce and extra-marital sex takes the film out of the ranks of those acceptable to adults." ". . . low moral tone . . ."
C:	1	"The acceptance of illicit sex relations is more extensive in this film than in most others."

The final published rating was B: "This serio-comic film, depicting a phase of life of the Armed Forces, tends to condone extra-marital sex and is tasteless and obnoxious in its presentation of numerous suggestive sequences."

THE CARPETBAGGERS Rating: B

Directed by Edward Dmytryk. Produced by Joseph E. Levine. Screenplay by John Michael Hayes (from Harold Robbins' novel). Distributed by Paramount. 150 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A sketchy and episodic tracing of the career of a chemical-aircraft-film tycoon, Jonas Cord, Jr. (George Peppard), from his inheritance of business from his hated father through a brutal and cold-blooded series of business and sex deals (notably with Carroll Baker as a Harlowesque sexpot) to a final personal realization of sorts brought on by a sincere cowboy film star's truthfulness (Alan Ladd).

Critics

Despite its gaudy and glamourous sugar-coating "The Carpetbaggers" is hardly to be recommended for youngsters and there will be adults who will find this a rather distasteful melodrama that wears awfully thin long before its kingsized running time of 150 minutes is expended.
- Variety, April 15, 1964.

It is merely a lurid enactment of a series of sordid episodes in which this character, played by George Peppard, without subtlety or style, is involved. . . . It is all synthetic, sensation merely for sensation's sake. And it is sensation on the trashy level.
-Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, July 5, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	6	"An interesting psychological study--raw in places, melodramatic in others [sic], but one which I would recommend for general adult patronage." - "Everybody knows it was a dirty book, so they come looking for a dirty movie and find a lot of it has been cleaned up." "Despite many 'borderline scenes'--the bedroom scene between Cord and his mother-in-law . . . the brutality of the fight between Cord and Nevada . . . In balance I feel an A-III. . . ." - "The film is a morality play in which Evil is punished. . . ."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-IV:	2	"Reservations because of suggestiveness." - "Emphasis was on the sex in and of itself, not as a necessary incident to the plot or characterization."
B:	9	". . . the presentation overly suggestive, the acceptance of divorce blatant, and the lack of clothes ridiculous. . . ." ". . . costuming . . . double meaning and suggestive dialogue. . . ." ". . . excessive displays of violence . . ." - "The film excuses a really vicious and evil life on the grounds that the evil man, Jonas, had personal difficulties and worries. His unbelievable (and artistically inept) reform is simply due to his finally being relieved of his worry about his sanity." - "The heavy emphasis on abnormal sexual relations--'do anything and everything to me'--is not healthy for a mass medium of entertainment as it's handled in this film, particularly with the hokey happy ending." - "Overall lack of taste . . ."

The final published rating was B: "Although the screenplay of this film is a considerably expurgated version of the lascivious novel from which it is derived, nevertheless the film's resolution of its theme is contrived and artificial. Furthermore, the director has not exercised mature restraint in the treatment of erotic material."

THE CONJUGAL BED (L'APE REGINA) Rating: B

Directed by Marco Ferreri. Produced by Henryk Ghroscicki and Alfonso Sansone. Screenplay by Goffredo Parise, Raphael Azcona, Marco Ferreri. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 90 minutes. Language: English subtitles.

Summary

Ugo Tognozzi plays the 40 year-old bachelor who finally marries a young, wholesome, religious bride (Marina Vlady) with a consuming desire for a baby and a voracious appetite, consequently, for sexual intercourse. The film recounts in a series of comic episodes her various strategems to get her husband to perform and perform and perform until he succeeds and dies as a result from nervous, emotional, and physical exhaustion. The film ends with the young widow's triumphant delivery of a baby girl.

Critics

Out of this simple theme the picture squeezes a lot of ironic mileage. Some of the sequences are utterly delightful in their insights. Frequently the picture is boldly adult. . . . The story, however, soon becomes a fairly predictable one.

- Film Daily, Sept. 16, 1963.

Marco Ferreri . . . has worked some amusing and clever variations on the old story, which will appeal mostly, however, to those who like off-color gags. . . . [Miss Vlady's] acting won her an award at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival. Tognazzi [sic] delineates the disintegration of the husband from an eager bridegroom to a disillusioned wreck with humor and subtlety. . . . Obviously the film is not for teen-agers, and some adults may find it offensive.

- Richard Gertner, Motion Picture Daily, Sept. 16, 1963.

For here is another ripe and racy Italian satiric comedy about the grimly potential hazards of the matrimonial state--at least, for mellowing gentlemen who marry verdant wives. It is not quite as sly and sardonic as "Divorce - Italian Style," not as wittily written nor as devastatingly played. . . . [T]his is not a picture to mince domesticity or words. But it is vividly recognizable and done in comparatively good taste.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Sept. 17, 1963.

Unlike "Divorce - Italian Style," this film lacks the sharp caricature, the quick ironies, and the glittering major and bright minor performances that can make unpalatable subjects the stuff of high comedy and stinging satire. The husband is so ordinary a man, the elderly relatives and the clerics so pedestrian in their reactions, the demonstrative line of the story so literal that the bit of grist is lost and a dreary preoccupation with sex is the end product.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 17, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"casual assumption that pre-marital license is acceptable."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	6	"But on the whole, the cogent graphicness nothwithstanding, there is more restraint than lack of control, . . . more ludicrous love-making than hot panting. Of course, whatever is there is bound, by its [sic] own nature of things, to stimulate some eroticism. Here we cannot erase the effect no matter what the intent; and I doubt that the intent, no matter how much benefit of the doubt you want to give them, was not geared for sexual attraction pure and simple." ". . . [T]his film would be very funny for married viewers . . . [but] several sequences relating to marital sex relations . . . could easily be occasions of sin for immature people." "its presentation in a few instances seemed just on the other side of good taste."
C:	2	"for obvious reasons" - "the unnecessary number and frankness of the love scenes."

The final published rating was B: "This classification is issued to a substantially revised version of this film which the distributor has also chosen to advertise as only for mature audiences. Although the reediting has reduced the gross suggestiveness of treatment which characterized the original, nevertheless there still remain objectionable costuming, situations, and dialogue."

FOUR FOR TEXAS Rating: B

Directed-Produced by Robert Aldrich. Produced by Howard W. Koch. Screenplay by Robert Aldrich and Teddi Sherman. Distributed by Warner Bros.-Sam Co. 124 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, two unerring marksmen of fortune in the old West, fight over $100,000 left after a stage coach attack. Martin wins and buys a showboat for gambling. Galveston bank president Victor Buono is out to do both Martin and Sinatra in. After numerous episodes of sex and gunplay, the feuding Martin and Sinatra unite against Buono, triumph and get married to respective beauties Ursula Andress and Anita Ekberg.

Critics

Audiences may be puzzled as to whether the expensively produced '4 For Texas' is intended to be drama, comedy-drama, or a tongue-in-cheek comedy that isn't supposed to make much sense in the story line. . . . The women have eye-filling figures which they reveal as far as modern propriety permits. . . . There is also violent death. . . . may find its best audience among the least sophisticated of moviegoers.
- Raymond Levy, Motion Picture Daily, Dec. 20, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	4	"A combination of poor film-making, a taste of brutality, some suggestiveness in dialog [sic] and costuming and a sorry hint at comedy. No one of these elements are sufficient to raise a decent objection, but the package as a whole does." - "A trite plot heavily laden with cheap alley talk and the visual use of women in costume and action for erotic purposes . . . reduce this silly slap-dash slapstick to a sheer pornographic film." "It's not very funny and there should be limits to subjects that are fit for farce. The positively depraved characters of this film don't seem suitable. If it is a satire, it should have a point of view."

The final published rating was B: "This contrived melodramatic comedy is frequently guilty of a brazen exploitation of indecent costuming and suggestive situations."

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE Rating: B

Directed by Terence Young. Produced by Harry Saltzman and Albert R. Broccoli. Screenplay by Richard Maibaum (from Ian Fleming's From Russia With Love). Distributed by United Artists. 118 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Secret Agent James Bond (Sean Connery) is assigned to steal a Russian cipher machine, Lektor, from the Istanbul Embassy of the Soviet Union.

The Lektor is actually bait to trap Bond, who is wanted by both the Russians and a mythical international spy ring called SPECTRE. Assisted by Kerim Bey, a Turkish secret police officer, and Tatiana Romanova (Daniela Bianchi), a Russian agent sent to entrap Bond, Bond gets the Lektor and leaves Istanbul with Tatiana, who decides to leave Russia for Bond. On his return, Bond must kill a homicidal maniac assasin, Red Grant (Robert Shaw), employed by SPECTRE, and outmaneuver a helicopter and a fleet of pursuing boats. He escapes while wreaking havoc on his enemies. Throughout the film there is much violence and professional sex, characteristic of Bond books and Bond films.

Critics

Well, there's no point in trying to tell you all the mad, naughty things that take place--the meetings with mysterious people, the encounters with beautiful girls, the bomb explosions, the chases. . . . Nor is there any point in trying to locate the various characters in the plot, all of whom are deliciously fantastic and delightfully well played.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, April 9, 1964.

The atmosphere created by a half dozen good actors vivifying Mr. Fleming's fast moving tale of intrigue and the well photographed background of colorful Istanbul, discourage the impulse to criticize this film for its improbability and amorality. . . . Lotte Lenya, in playing the Russian spy who has defected to SPECTRE, once again has a part with a lesbian angle that isn't necessary at all. Director Terence Young's touches cater to diverse tastes in this film--some of them quite unhealthy. But the preponderance of his tricks are just good fun.

- Charles A. Butler, Films in Review (May, 1964).

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	14	"The movie is simply absurd good fun and I cannot think it would seriously endanger the morals of any adult." - "Morality seems almost not an issue in movies of this genre, so that, for example, to give the picture a rating based on its failure to respect human life, reflection of a loose sexual code, etc., would seem somewhat silly." - "It would be misleading to the immature to suggest that these immoral actions within the film were to be condoned." - ". . . James Bond is a cross between Superman and Hugh Hefner. . . . The children we

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		can take care of ('For adults only') but what about the nuts? Mr. Oswald drew his last gasp of free air in a movie theatre. A film like this can help some frustrated people purge themselves of anxieties but it can also set into play an outlet for pent-up madness. Other than Box-office Roschack [sic] tests, I have no solution." All the reviewers here felt that the outrageous fantasy element of the film reduced the offensiveness of the sex and violence.
A-IV:	1	"Rather amusing and entertaining escapist entertainment for adults." This reviewer does not say why he voted for A-IV rather than A-III.
B:	11	". . . with respect to sex . . . the countless murders, etc., I'm not sure whether the humor offsets these weaknesses or adds to them by making them more appealing and alluring." - "One of these films, taken of and by itself, is probably not at all harmful. . . . [But] if one considers the possibility of a continuous diet of such films, . . . Bond's amorous conquests as an integral part of his character are, collectively, distasteful, and potentially dangerous to the mind of the young viewer." - "It provokes laughter or morbid fascination with cruel and unusual deaths." - "Emphasis on casual and gory killing . . . costuming and dancing of the gypsy girl during the credits shows that these unacceptable elements are being deliberately exploited in the film." - ". . . permeated with details of senseless brutality and sadism."
C:	1	"Unnecessary overemphasis on sex . . . excessive show of brutality . . . the many highly suggestive and double-meaning lines and scenes."

The final published rating was B: "Granted that this film is a tongue-in-cheek parody of the novel of the same title, nevertheless in its treatment the director has employed extreme suggestiveness in costuming, dancing and situations. Note: This classification is applicable only to prints shown in the U.S.A.

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME   Rating: B

Directed by Russell Rouse. Produced by Clarence Greene. Screenplay by Russell Rouse and Clarence Greene. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 98 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

This film is a factual recount of Polly Adler's (Shelley Winters) career as best and most successful prostitution madam of the 1920's and 1930's in New York City, until she was closed by Mayor La Guardia. At 16 Polly worked in a sweatshop, at 18 she was raped, at 21 a bootlegger (Robert Taylor) set her up as housekeeper for his mistress. Soon she was getting other girls for his friends and gradually ran her own establishment with half the headwaiters in New York on her payroll. In quasi-documentary style, the film introduces many fictional characters in secondary roles.

Critics

. . . seldom has the subject been handled with such candor. Film has been accorded rugged production and direction and likewise benefits by excellent acting.
- Variety, Aug. 5, 1964.

. . . a matter-of-fact movie that relates the shoddy story of Polly's lurid life, with little sympathy and less sensation, as a footnote to the social history of the '20's.
- Time, September 4, 1964.

The language is loaded with terms still unheard on radio and television, and there are episodes that even the patron who has read the book [Adler's autobiography] will not expect to see on the screen.
- William R. Weaver, Motion Picture Daily, Aug. 5, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	12	"prostitution is portrayed as sordid and unattractive . . . inelegant slang and earthy but not lewd or indecent by adult standards." - ". . . a very sentimental movie . . . As a film about hope and despair it has much truth in it, however softened by the blurry lens of Hollywood . . ." "generally judicious treatment of the plot . . ."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-IV:	9	"It will take much discrimination to benefit from this picture." - ". . . general tone . . . more suitable for the mature person."
B:	14	"Sensational subject matter handled in cheap fashion. The attempt to moralize isn't very convincing." "If it weren't for the screen credits [i.e., sexy scene shown with credits] (which are deliberately and rather offensively suggestive), I would be inclined to . . . A-III." "suggestive costumes and situations and at times crude language." - "Immoral conduct and corruption of public officials (the mayor, politicians, and police) seems to be considered . . . as the normal state of affairs . . . immodest dresses." - ". . . leaves the viewers with the impression that there were [in the 1920's] no decent people of Irish or Italian descent." - ". . . farcical treatment . . . artistic incompetence . . ." - "It glorified free love and immorality." - ". . . impure scenes as well as the subject matter of the film . . . make it objectionable."
C:	1	". . . violently opposed to the picture on grounds of theme and treatment; thematically, . . . argument of Shelley Winters for her state in life--economics--is not basically Christian."

The final published rating was B: "Despite a patent attempt to moralize on the evils of prostitution, this film is basically sensational and exploitative. This is evidenced in the treatment, which at times is grossly vulgar and suggestive."

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW (IERI, OGGI, DOMANI) Rating: B

Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Produced by Carlo Ponti. Screenplay by Cesare Zavattini, Eduardo De Filippo, Billa Billa, and Isabella Quarantotti. Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 119 minutes. Language: English Subtitles.

Summary

Three separate episodes about man and woman with Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren in the lead roles: Yesterday takes place in Naples and is about Adelina, a black marketeer who has avoided jail for years by being almost continually pregnant. The earthy and passionate woman's demands make a wreck of her husband, who nevertheless loves her and their children deeply. Today takes place in Milan and is about Anna, a well-minked and endowed matron who loves her Rolls even more than her kept man. Tomorrow is about a super-sexed Roman prostitute with a heart of gold, who vows temporary abstinence from sex to ask God to inspire a naive seminarian to return to his seminary and forget her, whom he moons over as the eternal feminine. Her vow causes her rich boyfriend, Mastroianni, acute discomfort, when she denies him after a lavish display of her accomplishments.

Critics

As if Miss Loren were not decoration enough for the flimsiest of fables, De Sica has added scenic vistas and endless sunsets to no important effect. He has provided a field day for the Loren lovers and thrown a bone to the Mastroianni fans. But to the uncommitted, "Yesterday, Today and Tommorw" may seem an eternity.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, March 18, 1964.

And if the fans can bear the creeping ennui that the first two items are likely to produce, they should get more than ample satisfaction and compensation from the third. That is, if they are open-minded enough to take a ribald joke that joins sex and religion as a shocking sacrilege. . . . It [first episode] gets both gross and obvious when her poor husband . . . runs out of strength to provide her with an exemption [through pregnancy] and she must go to jail. The idea is singularly heavy and the humor is painfully forced.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, March 18, 1964.

It is in this sequence [Tomorrow] that the two stars seem to have the most fun, suggesting that for these two particular Italians the act of sex is about as enjoyable as the act of eating. Any mystery about it is purely in the mind of the young seminarian. De Sica's comedy has its moments of realism, but a basic sentimentalism keeps seeping through, enhanced by the good-looking color photography.
- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, March 21, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	14	"This film is in the great Christian tradition of Chaucer, and Rabelais and Shakespeare. It should receive a special recommendation from the Legion. Any

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		opposition must arise from sick prurient irreverent manichean [sic] minds." "Some might object to the strip tease in the final sequence but it is an integral part of the sketch and the general context, punctuated by Mastroianni's frantic yelps, is a burlesque instead of a seduction." - "Fine adult comedy, strangely, both racy and wholesome." - "This is a testament of joy and hope . . . Unfortunately, all this is intermingled with a raucous obscenity which makes it inappropriate for an American family audience." "[Because of] cultural background, many Americans may be disturbed by the proud flaunting of the 'big belly', etc." - "Since adolescents in this country still giggle when they see a mother breast-feeding a child, I would advise a classification of A-III (Educators and parents, feel ashamed here)."
A-IV:	8	"If it were confined to art theatres I would find it most welcome. If it's going out to the mass theatres, I think it should be made clear that it could be morally harmful to those with undiscriminating tastes." - "Are [American audiences] able to see that in such a picture as this immorality is not being condoned, but that in a comic way, life is being shown? Because the answer . . . might have to be NO in many cases, this film should be rated A-IV."
B:	8	". . . it is hardly the thing to have babies merely to keep out of jail . . . it is misleading in that human beings do not bargain with God." - "Blatantly erotic in part." - "U.S. Catholics may be shocked by the use, or misuse, of religion in the third part." - "The presentation of the prostitute as a wholesome young lady leading a gay and carefree life." - "If the very seductive strip tease scene were cleaned up, I would go along with an A-III. . . . I believe it to be earthy but not dirty."
C:	6	"The bed scenes between Mastroianni and Loren are in my opinion highly objectionable. . . . The prayers said . . . are not sincere repentance but done as comedy and ridicule." - "The striptease at the end is particularly offensive and could in our opinion gravely jeopardize even a mature viewer." - "A flippant portrayal of sex." - "It makes a farce of . . . motherhood, marriage, the priesthood, and religious beliefs."

The final published rating was B: "Although this film is a comedy with satirical overtones, the amoral theme of its third episode is treated with unnecessary emphasis upon suggestive costuming and situations. Moreover, the context in which this episode is presented may be offensive to the religious sensitivity of the viewer."

THE SILENCE Rating: C

Directed and Produced and Screenplay by Ingmar Bergman. Distributed by Janus Films. 95 minutes. Language: Swedish (English subtitles).

Summary

Two sisters travel with the eleven-year-old son of one to a foreign country where a language is spoken that they cannot understand. They take a suite of rooms in a drab and baroque hotel. One sister is a nymphomaniac and the other seems to have lesbian tendencies. The latter is afflicted with coughing fits and labored breathing--she is the single one. The married sister leaves the hotel, picks up a cafe waiter and has intercourse with him in a church and then in another hotel room. The ill sister is confined to bed where she translates literature, masturbates once, and watches her sister have intercourse on another occasion. The boy roams the hotel, plays games, spies through keyholes at his mother and the waiter, naps with his nude mother. At the end both ill sister and boy are deserted by the mother who returns to Sweden.

Critics

Whether this strange amalgam of various states of loneliness and lust articulates a message may be questionable, but it does, at least, resolve into a vaguely affecting experience that moves on like a vagrant symphony.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Feb. 4, 1964.

Obviously--and ultimately--there is a surfeit of symbols, a weight of gratuitous innuendo, of action and reaction in almost psychoanalytical terms. But gratuitous as these seem, they in no way distract us from the fascination of Ester /single sister/, of whom Ingrid Thulin makes a heartbreakingly beautiful and powerful figure of sorrow, the sorrow of the solitary aware of the limbo in which she is lost. Miss Thulin brings a reality and depth to much that is irrelevant in Bergman's penchant for the rococo, the macabre, and the shocking (but actually naive) symbol.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Feb. 4, 1964.

> Is it that despair has become the fashionable artistic toy of our time, or is it a predominant mood that an artist, in search of truth, feels it necessary to convey? . . . Standing on its own, *The Silence* conveys its meaning at best obliquely, and mainly through antithesis. If the two sisters are comprehensible in their anguish, they are not tragic, because they have not been made so, and one is more chilled than moved by the delineation of their condition.
> - Hollis Alpert, *Saturday Review*, Feb. 8, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"Deals with evil but never condones it--on the contrary has an indirect positive comment on a 'godless' form of life."
A-IV:	1	"An attack upon sex isolated from humanity and love."
B:	1	"It is this near pornographic element, coupled with a sort of nihilistic despair, which raise a very serious objection to this film, even though it otherwise presents such subjects as lesbianism, masturbation, adultery, etc., in a meaningful context."
Undecided:	2	"I could not definitely place it in the A-IV category--though this is where I think it belongs--because to do that I feel I would have to be aware of what I think the author is doing. . . . I just am not sure. . . . My disinclination to give this film a B or C rating is based on ignorance, on my respect for Bergman's work in general, most of which I have seen, and on the *feeling* with respect to this film that the treatment is honest." "Is the film as such a fitting medium for an artist, which Bergman is beyond question, to free himself of tormenting thoughts and imaginings, which he has in common with many other people? Is the film as such not above all a 'socio-artistic' expression which cannot survive without the mass of people who are hardly prepared for the shocks as they are realized in many scenes and situations in films like this one?"
C:	4	"This picture might have some place in a clinical study of abnormal psychology. I cannot see what place this has in legitimate entertainment." - "His selection of

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		images is vulgar, insulting to a mature audience, and dangerously close to pure pornography." - "I failed to find justification for the strongly stimulating use of sex which did not seem counterbalanced or justified by a comprehensible message." "Too psychiatric and clinical and philosophical in its preoccupations to be released upon a generally unknowing public. It is for specialists . . . well grounded in . . . ethics and morality. Without these qualifications, the film will be of erotic appeal only for several reasons."

The final published rating was C: "The theme of this film, as formulated by its director, is "God's silence - the negative print." Being the last of a trilogy and interpreted against the over-all context the film presents the nightmare of a world left to itself in which the human spirit must suffocate if it cannot find or refuses to accept a meaning to life which transcends matter and the flesh. Although the serious intent of Mr. Bergman may be beyond doubt, nevertheless, serious questions are to be raised concerning the treatment of the theme.
His selection of images is sometimes vulgar, insulting to a mature audience, and dangerously close to pornography. In spite of the author's good intentions, therefore, he has seriously violated artistic taste and sensitivity and leaves the film's presentation open to sensational exploitation by the irresponsible."

WEEKEND Rating: C

Directed by Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt. Produced by Bent Christensen. Screenplay by Klaus Rifbjerg. Distributed by Cinema-Video International, Inc. 84 minutes. Language: Danish (English subtitles).

Summary

A weekend orgy of two married couples and a bachelor at a seaside resort. Jaded, in their thirties, the middle-class adults swap mates and engage in heavy drinking. When one of the husbands tries to rape the teen-age nursemaid of another couple's children, the others are shocked that he breaks the rules of the game. When an old couple, innocent and respectable, visit them and discuss the exuberance of their youth, they are embarrassed. At the close of the weekend, they return to their empty lives, neither sadder nor wiser, but just fatigued.

Critics

. . . too often the film exploits the malaise it pretends to examine, and the drama becomes sociosexual cheesecake, an oversized slice of Danish blue. The camera records what the characters do, but offers few insights into the individuals or the society that produced them.

- *Time*, May 1, 1964.

WEEKEND ist als Ganzes ein sehr grosses Erlebnis. Es ist zu hoffen, dass der Film vor ein Weltpublikum gebracht werden wird. Er verdient es.

(WEEKEND is on the whole a very important experience. It is to be hoped that this film will be shown all over the world. It is worthy [of such distribution].)

- *Verdens Gang*, Oslo, Norway, April 16, 1963.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	1	"Rather than dramatize [sic] the supposed moral issues of the film, these [frank and vulgar sexual passages] seem rather to be the heart of the matter, with the pathetic philosophical speeches added as a kind of useless pious packaging. This is too bad, because I suspect that the makers of the film had better intentions."
C:	6	"Even though the movie tried to show the boredom and shame of this type of living, the purpose could have been attained by a less suggestive portrayal. . . ." - ". . . the worst movie I have ever seen." - ". . . unnecessarily provocative, vulgar, and in bad taste . . . great embarrassment [of the actors] equals only that of the audience." - "Dull, degrading, drab, and depressing. I see no redeeming feature in it at all."

The final published rating was C: "Although an effort at a serious portrayal of the emptiness of a segment of the Danish middle-class society, this film, in treatment, exploits sexual perversity, sometimes even to the point of pornography."

Note: Protesting the condemnation of the Legion, the distributors ran a full page advertisement in the June 3, 1964 issue of *Film Daily* which read in part:

> We are not preachers. We are businessmen. We feel that it is our right to display films which meet our ethical

and moral standards. We believe that all of the arts have their own language and it is a universal one.

Therefore it was with some surprise that we noted the Legion of Decency had reported that our film was "condemned." It is their right to hold opinions and to publish them. This is the American way. But we reserve the right to disagree. We believe that this label on "Week End" is unfair and unjust.

It carries with it an unwarranted stigma, on this film, of something outside the pale of respectability. We firmly believe that we are correct in our rating.

. . . .

In the face of what we considered overwhelmingly strong evidence to the contrary, the Legion of Decency has, this week, refused to change its labeling of the film. We think that they are wrong.

We are therefore forced, as independent businessmen, proud of the heritage of our standards, to call upon you, the exhibitors of the nation, to look at "Week End" not in terms of the pressures upon you because of the label of the content of the film as "good" or "bad," but because it is a property drawing large audiences who do not have the same opinion as the Legion of Decency.

October 1964-October 1965

THE COLLECTOR Rating: A-IV

Directed by William Wyler. Produced by Jud Kinberg and John Kohn. Screenplay by Stanley Mann and John Kohn (from novel by John Fowles). Distributed by Columbia. 119 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

The strange story of a London bank clerk (Terence Stamp) who wins a football pool and uses the money to enact a psychotic fantasy: to kidnap a girl (Samantha Eggar) he has long admired from afar but never met and keep her prisoner in the well-fitted cellar of an isolated country house. The terrified girl pleads with him to release her, tries to escape during her infrequent 'airings', even tries to seduce him. Finally she dies of pneumonia after two months and, unrepentant, he looks for another girl.

Critics

. . . what might have emerged on the screen as a sadistic shocker becomes instead a fascinatingly compassionate suspense story . . . grueling and nerve wracking though it is.
- Judith Crist, *The New York Herald Tribune*, June 18, 1965.

Mr. Wyler has turned in a tempting and frequently startling, bewitching film, but he has failed to make it anything more than a low-key chiller that melts in a conventional puddle of warm blood towards the end.
- Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, June 18, 1965.

Neither performer is strong enough to turn the opportunity into an actor's *tour de force*; and the lack of any clear-cut point of view toward the characters makes it difficult for one to sustain interest . . . the film is well-mounted but lifeless.
- Arthur Knight, *Saturday Review*, June 12, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	17	". . . a macabre, sick film, nevertheless it seems to us that it would not be morally harmful to mature adults." "The movie was extremely well acted and the bathtub and seduction scenes were integral parts of the plot, whiich, if cut or modified, would detract from the film's overall excellence." - "There really isn't any moral objection to teenagers viewing this film except that it is perhaps too strong a delineation of a psychotic personality." "A moving and illuminating human document."
A-IV:	12	"[not] wise to recommend to the general public. . . . almost a third of the pornography industry is devoted to the bondage fetish, and bondage figures heavily in the treatment of the film." - ". . . sensitive treatment given to this abnormal love story." - ". . . a totally artistic achievement . . . [but] it cannot be recommended for all [some of whom might] misconstrue the treatment." "[only] for those who can appreciate and grasp the latent meaning of the film without being distracted by the mechanics." "My doubts concerning the fitness of the theme for a *mass* medium of entertainment."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	5	"The packaging /i.e., artistic film techniques and acting/ produced expectations which were subsequently, and continually, disappointed. If anything, it served to magnify and accelerate the sorry status of the two principals, and led to an absorbtion in the anatomy of hysteria that a less pretentious format might not have evoked. . . . For a while, I considered recommending an A-IV classification, but we're not really in the realm of the valuable here." - "There are objectionable parts: 1. The love scene in the living room in which Miranda takes the initiative. 2. The bathroom scene in which she drops her robe and stands naked before him. 3. The scene in the garden in which after caressing Miranda's hair and embracing her, his actions would indicate that he has had an orgasm." ". . . involves nudity . . . depressing . . ." "morbid . . . suggestive . . . excessive brutality."

The final published rating was A-IV: "This film which treats potentially sensational material with artistic restraint and tastefulness, may prove emotionally disturbing even for some sensitive adults because of its depth-study of a psychopath."

DARLING Rating: A-IV

Directed by John Schlesinger. Produced by Joseph Janni. Screenplay by Frederic Raphael. Distributed by Embassy. 120 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Julie Christie plays a professional career girl with no morals who uses sex for diversion and personal advancement. Married, she moves in with another man, a TV commentator (Dirk Bogarde) who introduces her to 'in' people. When he is no longer useful, she gives in to an advertising executive (Laurence Harvey), a cold calculator who uses her as much as he is used in getting her publicity. Finally a celebrity, she meets an Italian prince and marries him and his wealth and is suffocated by the boredom of luxurious respectability and terrified by the minimal demands made on her as head of a household and step-mother. She leaves the Prince. Her non-life goes on as the film ends. Throughout, she has had the buddy-buddy companionship of an English homosexual fashion photographer.

Critics

Everything about *Darling*--from its opulent appearance to its theme to its maker's attitudes--is stylish and up-to-date--so much so that the film should have vast appeal for sophisticated audiences--especially those who flock to art theatres in big cities. To begin with, it is fashionably preoccupied with sex, concentrating heavily on details of the various love affairs of "Darling" from the first. . . . *Darling* has a goodly share of what have come to be 'obligatory' scenes in fashionable movies: an orgy (after the mode of *La Dolce Vita*); a nude love scene; a satire on TV commercials, and a mimicking of the pretentious remarks of amateur art lovers. . . .
- Richard Gertner, *Motion Picture Daily*, Aug. 4, 1965.

. . . it is really much more the destruction of a whole range of London social types than it is a sincere contemplation of a miserably misspent life. And as such . . . it is loaded with startling expositions and lacerating wit. . . . Actually the screenplay . . . no more reveals the several characters who move more or less to the fore than we assume will be revealed in the profile . . . for a slick magazine. ['Darling'] is uncommunicative of the urges that make her tick.
-Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, Aug. 4, 1965.

If the message of *Darling* is no great shakes, if the basic material seems fadedly familiar, the film-making itself is decidedly clever, representative of the new subtle look . . .
- Hollis Alpert, *Saturday Review*, Aug. 8, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	5	"It has the same maturity of handling as *The Pumpkin Eater* or *The Servant* . . . Filled with effective, if bitter, symbols . . . [such as] 'the Happiness Girl.'" "The sex scenes are not shockingly nor provocatively presented." ". . . it clearly illustrates the frustration that must follow a search for happiness which begins from self-centeredness."
A-IV:	10	"Not an immoral picture--a strong one for average taste." "One *La Dolce Vita* is enough and I see little value in making the same point over and over again. But [this is not] the question before us. . . . I see nothing anti-Christian or immoral in what the film says." - "[Christie] had little range and did not quite manage

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		to achieve the pathetic impression the script seemed to call for." - ". . . the power and incisive psychological truth achieved through the director's treatment transforms a potential sensation into a sobering, basically moral experience."
B:	13	". . . the torrid love scenes, the earthy dialogue, the treatment given to indissolubility of marriage [sic]. . . . Despite the artistic value [of the film as a whole], the moral danger prevails in my judgment." - "Double adultery is too 'matter-of-factly' presented." - "Rather than being an expose of the shallowness and insipidity and superficiality of a certain class in English society, we thought the film itself shallow, insipid, and superficial." - "I did find Bogarde's action in permanently abandoning his wife and two children for a light-headed and self-centered female to be incongruous in view of his apparent maturity and intellectual background. Also an Italian prince marrying a second-rate actress-model to mother his seven children seemed unlikely (and stupid)." - "Its treatment of the more sensational aspects of the heroine's life vitiates partially by a lack of norm for conduct, the satirical point of the film." "Adultery and sexual intercourse can easily be indicated without pushing realism to this objectionable point [i.e., nudity in bed]."
C:	8	"free love theme, treatment and scenes, and costumes." "Ugly, ugly, ugly is what this movie is." - ". . . a sordid story of unrestrained immorality." - "She is simply an improbable fraud from beginning to end." - "This film is a relentless torrent of sexual rain for its own sake." "My biggest objection to the film is the pointlessness of it, the complete lack of purpose, and the unresolved ending." "This morbid movie might be a slice of some poor slut's life, but if so, it should be kept in the gutter or the psychiatric files."

The final published rating was A-IV: "This caustic social commentary on the gradual spiritual, moral, and finally, human degeneracy of a young English woman explodes the time-worn and contemporary code that "whatever one does is all right as long as no one gets hurt." The graphic delineation of this theme is such that it calls for reservations."

Note: NCOMP received complaints from some Catholics for the acceptable rating given. "Unobjectionable for adults with reservations - What are these reservations? To me, the movie was totally revolting." (Letter from NCOMP files.)

NCOMP also gave DARLING its first annual award for "Best Film For Mature Audiences" because its "artistic vision and expression best embody authentic human values."

MARRIAGE - ITALIAN STYLE Rating: A-IV

Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Produced by Carlo Ponti. Screenplay by Eduardo de Filippo, Renato Castellani, Antonio Guerra, Leo Benvenuto and Piero de Bernardi. Distributed by Embassy. 99 minutes. Language: Italian (English subtitles).

Summary

Domenico (Marcello Mastroianni) and Filomena (Sophia Loren) have been living together for years out of wedlock, he a well-to-do bakery owner, she his kept woman and business manager. They met during the war in a bawdy house where she was employed at 17. In her 20's he sets her up as his mistress, in her thirties, he takes her to live with his mother, a difficult invalid to nurse, in her 40's she helps with the business as well as the household. They are not married and Domenico has his eyes on a pretty young cashier. To get married, Filomena fakes a deathbed scene, introduces him to three children she has secretly cared for and tells him that one of them is his. Finally, Domenico consents.

Critics

These old conventions of farce work on the stage. But on the screen, and especially with De Sica's social realismo . . . the brittleness of the farce snaps and we are left with something that is neither grippingly true nor amusingly false. . . .
- Newsweek, Jan. 4, 1965.

They [Domenico and Filomena] convey an idea that personal charm condones all impudence with conventional conduct.
- Alton Cook, The New York World-Telegram and Sun, Dec. 21, 1964.

This is a Vittorio De Sica movie, with the laughter, the social comedy, the touch of tears and the wonderful moments of realism that are this master director's stock in trade.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Dec. 21, 1964.

The something wonderful that's happened is the conception and projection of a film so frank and free and understanding of a certain kind of vital woman--and man too--that sends you forth from the theatre feeling that you've known her--and him--all your life. . . . And the total combination is so congenial to the material at hand that it adds up to the achievement of one of the dandiest films of the year.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Dec. 21, 1964.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	2	". . . a remarkable treatment of human indifference and justice . . . [but] a comedy rather than a tragedy." "Pius XII would not consider this . . . an ideal film. But in and through De Sica's highly humorous treatment . . . there are such values as human personal commitment and fidelity, . . ."
A-IV:	1	". . . the happy ending is based on positive values in the characters' personalities--the woman's search for true love, her dedication to her children and her desire to have them, and the man's tortured conscience about his son and the deeper values to which he is thus led. . . . Now much of the objectionable costuming occurs only in short flashes and is in the context of humor so that one is not induced to focus attention on the suggestive aspect of it. [It is also] in the early part of the movie before one is involved in the deeper aspects of the plot and character development."
B:	4	"Of no little artistic merit . . . thoroughly entertaining. However, there are at least two scenes in which unnecessarily suggestive costuming make it objectionable." ". . . unnecessary nudity and intimacies . . ." "Prostitution is treated sympathetically. . . . Even her having three illegitimate children is made to appear as virtuous because of the tender mother-love of them." "A very well done film. . . . However the brothel scenes were superfluous and in bad taste."
C:	1	". . . too many scenes of excessively daring dress and love making . . . more than an incidental part of the picture."

The final published rating was A-IV: "A well-made social satire, sometimes strongly realistic in its treatment, this film implies that there are such values as personal commitment and fidelity and that one who lacks a sense of these is less than human."

Note: Some Catholics were shocked that the film was not B or C and wrote in complaint to the Office: "When I contrast the above [brothel and nudity] scenes with the words of Him who denounced even an intellectual act of lust, it is difficult to see how the Legion classification is either theologically or morally defensible." (Letter from NCOMP files, n.d.)

CASANOVA 70 Rating: B

Directed by Mario Monicelli. Produced by Carlo Ponti and Joseph E. Levine. Screenplay by Furio Scarpelli, Agenore Incrocci, and Mario Monicelli (from story by Tonino Guerra). Distributed by Embassy Pictures. 113 minutes. Language: Italian (English subtitles).

Summary

A sex farce starring Marcello Mastroianni as a jaded NATO officer who is only interested in sexual conquest if there is an element of danger. The film is episodic, one conquest or failure to conquer after another. His mistress can only be enjoyably wooed, for instance, if he breaks into his own home as a burglar, taking the chance that he may be shot.

Critics

One gets the feeling that both Mastroianni and Monicelli are more at home in human comedy than in sex farce: whenever the touch is earthy and the humor universal they glitter. But the basic theme is relatively simple . . . and ultimately director and star turn to repetition, to pratfalls and some weary jokes . . . to fill out the time. The colors, costumes and sets more than fill the eye.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, July 21, 1965.

This is a one-joke film--and, to be honest about it, a pretty weak and shabby joke at that. . . . [It] isn't high art, but it is sensuous and sometimes sensual fun.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, July 21, 1965.

The direction of Mario Monicelli is expert as is the photography of Aldo Tonti and the witty musical accompaniment provided by Armando Torvaioli. Mastroianni is always a superb actor and in this wonderful comedy he surpasses himself.
- Jack Thompson, The Journal-American, July 21, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	6	"Definitely delightful but not for the kiddies." "It is played for laughs, not sniggers." - "This tale of sexual adventure seems to put the accent on adventure. . . . a sort of Italian Walter Mitty, more laughable than despicable, and more pitiable than he is admirable."
A-IV:	8	"The reservation is that the classification is made from the standpoint of the movie's being an elaborate joke." "A light and satiric touch." - ". . . fully aware of the visually intended effect of the dolls, but since the shots are neither unduly long nor ends in themselves, we'll go along with them." - ". . . the action is so fast-stepping that prurience is outraced too."
B:	13	". . . semi-nudity [not justified by] sufficient artistic significance to rate an A-IV . . . light treatment of a theme (continuous seduction) which in itself is not really funny is bad enough to rate a C." - "unimaginative and vulgar." ". . . atmosphere of sexuality throughout the film." ". . . complete injustice to marital partners." - "The 'Playboy' philosophy . . . is presented for emulation by all." "The theme . . . did not merit the long, numerous and explicit [sex] scenes in the film."
C:	10	"This is again one of those films which is classifiable as A-III or C, depending on whether or not the satire of a delicate subject 'came off' or not [sic]. Since I believe that this one did not, I'd be inclined to C." - "It is a long dirty joke, completely in bad taste and prurient." - ". . . perhaps a C is necessary to express the very grave reservations that need to be expressed. Incidentally, couldn't we drop the unfortunate expression 'condemned' as a description of the completely objectionable classification? It only

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		increases the box office, and I don't think we really want to 'condem' anyone or anything." ". . . presents a serious danger to the spiritual welfare of the viewers." - "There is too much over-exposure [of skin] throughout the entire film."

The final published rating was B: "Some genuinely amusing sequences and occasional human touches do not sufficiently compensate for the crudity of this one-joke sex farce. Moreover, the treatment is needlessly suggestive in several instances. This classification is applicable only to prints shown in the U.S.A."

THE CINCINNATI KID Rating: B

Directed by Norman Jewison. Produced by Martin Ransohoff, Screenplay by Ring Lardner, Jr. and Terry Southern (Adapted from novel by Richard Jessup). Distributed by MGM. 102 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Basically a big build-up to a great game of stud poker. Karl Malden plays the honest dealer who sets up the match. Edward G. Robinson is the hard-bitten The Man, the acknowledged champ whom Steve McQueen challenges and loses to in the finale, despite and not because of unwanted help offered by Rip Torn. Sidelights along the way are Malden's dishonest tramp of a wife, Ann-Margaret, Joan Blondell as Ladyfingers, and Tuesday Weld as McQueen's girl friend.

Critics

. . . a melodrama about gambling and gamblers that climaxes with one of the more exciting--and most beautifully filmed--stud poker marathons on record.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Oct. 28, 1965.

. . . emerges as a tenseful examination of the gambling fraternity, what makes it tick, how big games are played. Embodied in its forceful enactment are such boxoffice elements as excitement, suspense, and a liberal dosage of sex . . .

- Variety, Oct. 20, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of Ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	4	". . . heavy romantic and sexual dalliance seems adult fare."
B:	3	"the bed scene with Ann-Margaret . . ." - "too sexy and provocative."

The final published rating was B: "The gratuitous introduction of suggestive costuming and situations blunt what could have been a meaningful film."

IN HARM'S WAY Rating: B

Directed and Produced by Otto Preminger. Screenplay by Wendell Mayes (from novel by James Bassett). Distributed by Paramount. 165 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

The film opens with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. John Wayne plays the commander of a cruiser which escapes the bombing but is torpedoed in pursuit of Japanese ships, for which he is deprived of command by Dana Andrews, a neurotic admiral who bears a personal grudge against him. Wayne falls in love with Patricia Neal, and his son from a previous marriage appears after 18 years away from his father, seeking a soft public relations job on Andrews' staff. Kirk Douglas plays Wayne's ill-starred executive officer whose unfaithful wife was killed by the bombing and who dies in a reckless mission after he rapes a nurse who is in love with Wayne's son. She commits suicide. Wayne is assigned command of a large amphibious operation by the overall commander, Henry Fonda. The operation succeeds, Wayne settles down with Patricia Neal and his son grows up and is assigned to PT boat duty.

Critics

Preminger makes his war scenes spectacular and noisy . . . within these primitive limits, Preminger stages a rousing, ear-and-eye shattering entertainment . . . Wayne's crusty, cynical heroics are given full sway . . .

- Alton Cook, The New York World Telegram and Sun, April 7, 1965.

This is a slick and shallow picture that Mr. Preminger puts forth here, a straight cliche-crowded melodrama. . . . He gives you a lot of bang for a buck. He simply neglects to make it have the hard, crushing sound and feel of truth.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, April 7, 1965.

It's a great big boom-bang-boff saga jampacked with battle film cliches and soap-opera situations . . . sound and fury signifying nothing, machine-made for the box office.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, April 7, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-II:	2	". . . dating of married persons, rape, suicide, the suggestive dance at the beginning, nudity, are incidents in an otherwise wholesome and long [sic] picture." ". . . a broad canvas of humanity in war from a variety of perspectives."
A-III:	9	". . . it is such an incredibly superficial and inept piece of phony-baloney that the characters are not intelligible enough . . . and you really can't tell whether the picture is moral or not because you can't tell what opinion Preminger intended you to have of any given character." "[Immoral activities] are not condoned." - "Cowboys and Indians in the South Pacific." - "Standard, tedious, and inevitable."
A-IV:	4	"Preminger seems to be treading the thin line between a meaningful thematic development and a series of sensational time-outs to juice up the war games." "Morally this film will cause some problems . . . nothing explicitly objectionable . . . there is implied a general 'carpe diem' attitude."
B:	7	"A heavy load of sex and shock." - ". . . we must accept extra-marital intercourse as part of their pattern of (otherwise) faultless behaviour." - "The typical notion of wartime morality . . . you like each other?--Well, just hop into bed." - ". . . sex . . . to fill the box office." "It did seem to portray extramarital relations as an accepted way of life in the service."

The final published rating was B: "A shallow melodrama developed against the background of Pearl Harbor and the Pacific War, this film, which could be of interest to action fans, becomes morally objectionable because an audience is expected to accept an extra-marital liaison between the hero and the heroine as a part of the pattern of their otherwise faultless behavior."

THE LOVED ONE Rating: B

Directed by Tony Richardson. Produced by John Calley and Haskell Wexler. Screenplay by Christopher Isherwood and Terry Southern (adapted from novel by Evelyn Waugh). Distributed by MGM and Filmways. 116 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Set within the Hollywood death-industry, the film casts Robert Morse as a pet cemetary employee in love with a corpse-cosmetician (Anjanette Comer) at Whispering Glades, a Forest Lawn parody of a human cemetary. Her embalming chief, Mr. Joyboy (Rod Steiger) is morbidly in love with her. The owner of the cemetary, Rev. Glenworthy (Jonathan Winters) has a plan to blast corpses into orbit under the slogan of "Resurrection Now!" This occasions much satire of the military who must be consulted about the space shots. There is also satire of momism in the ample form of Mr. Joyboy's mother. Disillusioned by both love and the industry she is in, Miss Comer commits suicide by self-embalment.

Critics

It's primary failure is epitomized, perhaps, in the advertised claim that here is a movie "with something to offend everyone." This is a small-boy boast of how outrageous the bully boys are going to be in their infidelities to Waugh but a modest one, for not only is the film at times offensive--it is also on occasion repellent, sick-sick-sick and, alas, just plain boring.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Oct. 12, 1965.

Terry Southern has somehow acquired the reputation of being the ultimate put-on artist: anything he writes is supposed to be the cool beyond cool. He has a modern adolescent's notion of the enemy: white southerners, businessmen, the military, scientists. . . . Like a schoolboy, Southern seems to think his targets are self-evidently funny. We're all supposed to giggle wildly when he does. . . . Southern's heavy hand wouldn't stick out so much if the director would only slap it down; instead, Richardson is trying to overreach it.
- Pauline Kael, Life, Oct. 29, 1965.

Instead [of intelligent satire], the film shows an indiscriminately demented world of queers, lechers, hypocrites, gadflies, opportunists, gluttons and frauds, with no standard of sanity to measure them against.
- *Newsweek*, Oct. 18, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	2	"It is brilliant satire in the unhampered Swift tradition."
Undetermined:	1	"I cannot imagine any audience or age group having a good time watching this one."
Undecided:	3	"If the film is put in the A-IV category [instead of B], we should clearly warn any prospective audience of the revolting scenes involving corpses, etc." "I would say A-IV on the grounds that the film devastatingly exposes many current mores; but I might venture a B rating on the grounds that the film becomes too enmeshed in what it is exposing."
A-IV:	6	"[Many offensive scenes] are not so much morally objectionable as they are, however, artistic weak points . . ." "The dialogue is, in many cases, caustic and crude. The handling of certain nationalistic and ethnic prejudices is thrown in without any artistic taste. . . . The seduction scene in which 'The Blessed Reverend' attempts to seduce Amy is not only objectionable but even borders on the obscene. . . . [But] since it is basically a satire . . . A-IV." ". . . actually true religion and the value of the body and the dignity of death are being upheld through ridiculing their abuse." - "There are several instances where the film dips into some vulgarity and irreverence. One cannot seriously contend that such material will scandalize anyone--at least not in the context of this presentation."
B:	8	"The gluttony scenes were revolting and in very bad taste." "The occasional references to the 'Resurrection' bordered on the blasphemous." - "Lack of reverence for the dead." ". . . the party girls in the coffins for the entertainment of the army officers and

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		the naked dancing silhouettes." "The 'Mom' scenes are tasteless in the extreme." ". . . the suicide of the protagonist . . . a depressive statement about the impotence of the idealistic . . ."
C:	1	"I do not condemn the picture on these [erotic sequences] alone, but for the overall manner in which practically every network of our society is depicted."

The final published rating was B: "This heavy-handed satire tends to be so completely negative in its treatment of love, burial rites, and human institutions that there is little examined which seems even partially redeemable. Moreover, a commercial appeal to prurient interest is manifest in its choice of erotic and other offensive details."

MALE HUNT

Rating: B

Directed by Edouard Molinaro. Produced by Robert Amon and Claude Jaeger. Screenplay by France Roche. Distributed by Pathe Contemporary. 92 minutes. Language: French (English subtitles).

Summary

Three separate episodes about French Don Juan's which illustrate the theme that the female is more pursuer than pursued. Jean-Paul Belmondo plays the first male lover who quits his job as a procurer when one of his prostitutes is arrested. He ends up married to a sweet young thing who becomes a shrew after wedlock. Claude Rich plays a gay bachelor who indulges in adultery with a married mistress only to be trapped into marriage by an apparently demure secretary. Jean-Claude Brialy plays a skittish bridegroom who runs from the altar only to meet a skilled confidence woman (Francoise Dorleac) on a Greek cruise, who fleeces him of a fortune, lets him get it back if he marries her in the bargain. He does.

Critics

It is a blandly ordinary little fable . . . [But] what is engaging about it is the amount of pictorial surprise that Mr. Molinaro has managed to develop with just a fast, flashy style.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, April 20, 1965.

At worst the film is pleasantly amusing, at best it provides some good fun.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, April 20, 1965.

The basic conceit of Male Hunt--that in the sexual game it is the female, not the male, who is the predator--has been made fragile by repeated use, and it rather quickly breaks down under the frenzied maneuvering it is subjected to here.

- Richard Schickel, Life, May 7, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	2	"I have a feeling that repeated snipings at [Judaeo-Christian] principles [on sex and marriage] even in jest may ultimately wear through the fabric." ". . . the low moral tone that pervades the whole film and the easy tolerance of adultery and fornication . . ."
C:	1	"Because of suggestive dialogue, situations, and lack of costuming."

The final published rating was B: "This farce about courtship and marriage tends to the excess of immature cynicism."

THE SANDPIPER Rating: B

Directed by Vincente Minelli. Produced by Martin Ransohoff. Screenplay by Dalton Trumbo and Michael Wilson (from story by Martin Ransohoff). Distributed by MGM. 116 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Elizabeth Taylor's role is that of a free-thinking artist who imagines herself and all human beings as sandpipers, birds that must be free to fly as they wish. To this end, she lives alone in a cabin on the Big Sur coast of California with her illegitimate son, whom she has raised to be a non-conformist. The state finds the boy troublesome, however, and demands that he be sent to school. The boy goes to a school run by an Episcopalian minister (Richard Burton). Contact with Miss Taylor and her artistic and bohemian set leads the minister from organized religion, his wife and two children, and his school and ministry to seek a new life. The affair between Taylor and Burton is torrid, despite their long discussions.

Critics

Built up to give the impression that it is taking a disapproving view of an adulterous affair between a free-thinking woman and an Episcopalian clergyman, it is really a slick and sympathetic sanction of the practice of free love--or at least of an illicit union that is supposedly justified by naturalness . . . it uses the formidable Miss Taylor to rationalize values and views that are immature, specious, meretricious and often ridiculous.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, July 16, 1965.

Some of Miss Taylor's dialogue appears to have been cribbed straight out of The Feminine Mystique . . . where Mr. Burton's dialogue derives from is harder to ascertain--old-time afternoon radio soap-operas, perhaps.

- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, July 24, 1965.

Doubtless as an exploitation gimmick, Elizabeth Taylor . . . is frequently overexposed via lowcut sweaters and tops, and there is one scene where she is completely nude to the waist except for her hands barely covering the focal points. Since there is no definite story point to be established by such cleavage, many unquestionably will be offended by the poor taste evidenced by the star. Certain stature is to be expected at the boxoffice, however, through the sock draw of the two stars, backed by quality production throughout.

- Variety, June 30, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	5	"The treatment is valid, though unfortunately sensationalized in the area of sex. I think it is not unessential that the protagonist be a man of religion." - "The movie fails to see that her paganism is as much of a pose as his Christianity." "The conflict [between philosophies of Burton and Taylor] is a valid one and actually exists in the world today."
A-IV:	8	". . . neo-romanticism, and largely unsound, although not without some vagrant truths. I do not think the theme is corrupting because it lacks plausibility, both in theory and as presented, especially as presented." - "It is a contribution, if a not too intelligent one, to the dialogue concerning the sacredness of the individual . . ." - ". . . thought-provoking and in many instances soul stirring. Its ultimate

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		conclusion of a conquest of good over evil, that is, the hero leaving his paramour, makes the film acceptable for a mature adult audience." - "[the reservation is due to] the failure of the theme to come through. Consequently, Miss Taylor's 'religion' could--unwittingly, I believe--seem to be the philosophy of life offered to us."
B:	22	"[Burton] is a straw Christian, set up by an uninformed scriptwriter to be knocked down by a cliche. . . . [T]his film does not confront us with truth but with triviality, a destructive, ignorant, foolish, undermining triviality." ". . . an insidious tract, unredeemed by any thought or insight" - "The very choice of these two people . . . was studied sensationalism." - "Unfortunately there seems to be a consensus among those who crafted the film that audiences would be interested in as many closeups of the star's anatomy as they could see." - ". . . blatantly suggestive treatment . . . puerile dialogue [for theology]." "Irreligiosity of reference to Virgin Birth." ". . . one tedious and tawdry love sequence after another . . . add nothing to the fabric of the story, but rather stand out as unnecessary and tasteless props designed only to pander . . ." - "The impression given in the film is that [Burton's characterization as minister of religion] is not an exception [but is representative of class]."
C:	8	"[The pagan romanticism is presented] by the development of the ritualistic, pseudo-religious motif of primitivism." ". . . ideas expressed make evil [adultery, irresponsibility] appear good." - "[Choice of minister as lover indicate that] whatever the coat or the collar, it is corpuscles and goose bumps that rule the world." - "And the worst sham of all, the perversion of religious doctrine held sacred by many as if a shocking sneer is valid enough to make a point." "It glorifies a woman who is proud of her lack of morals . . ."
B or C:	1	"delve[s] so far into what, in my view, borders on pornography."

The final published rating was B: "Using the device of an adulterous relationship between a non-conforming artist and a clergyman, this film depicts a confrontation between the values of organized religion and society and those of the 'pure primitive.' Though the theme could have validity, it is compromised by the weak development of the minister's character: a straw Christian is set up to be knocked down by a cliche. Moreover, suggestive treatment is a further handicap to a serious consideration of the theme."

WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT Rating: B

Directed by Clive Donner. Produced by Charles K. Feldman. Screenplay by Woody Allen. Distributed by United Artists. 108 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A sort of sick-humor Marx Brothers' farce whose plot is incidental: The male editor (Peter O'Toole) of a fashion magazine in Paris is prevented from settling down with his fiance (Romy Schneider) because of his super-sex appeal which has women coming at him continually in frenzied battalions. For help he goes to a psychiatrist (Peter Sellers), who is himself a neurotic sexpot. Dream sequences parody Fellini's 8 1/2 and the film ends in a mad Marx Brothers' mayhem at a hotel followed by the classic chase. Much of the humor is blue and a lot of skin is shown.

Critics

It looks as though the actors . . . were . . . given a general story line and asked to make a vague attempt to follow it. Then they were turned loose on the sets each day and allowed to improvise. . . . All the way through their labored efforts runs a feeling of psychopathic strain, as though the characters were all disturbed children engaged in violent, sex-tinged water-play.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, June 23, 1965.

What could, indeed should, have been an off-beat satiric mold-mashing little comedy, much in the manner of Hard Day's Night, emerges instead as a shrieking, reeking conglomeration of dirty jokes, dreary camp and blatant ambi-sexuality wrapped around a tediously plodding plot and stale comedy routines.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, June 23, 1965.

Everyone involved presumably felt they were having a lot of stylish fun with this non-plot, and maybe that's the trouble. So admiring are they of their freedom that they all come out stilted and artificial, and almost entirely unfunny.

- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, July 17, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
Abstention:	1	"It is not so much harmful as innocuous, it does a disservice to the medium of film by using old gags and cliches. . . . Hardly worth writing against or warning against. Just ignore it."
A-III:	1	No reason given.
B:	6	"Amoral, suggestive situations and clothing . . ." "Besides nudity, there is an almost relentless patter of double-meaning and suggestive remarks throughout . . ." ". . . too much petting and nudity." - "the general theme of illicit sex--while this was meant to be funny, it did not turn out that way."
C:	5	"The costuming and situations are offensive, the dialogue is generally witless, and the episodes are strained and disconnected. But the most disturbing aspect is the complete lack of human insight." - ". . . all in an amoral atmosphere where sex is everything and moral values non-existent." "A spectacularly dirty movie which immerses the audience in the [sick] eroticism it is supposed to be satirizing . . ."

The final published rating was B: "This labored comedy is simply a 'dirty' movie which immerses the audience in the eroticism which it is supposed to be satirizing. Unworthy of the talent that has been expended on it, the film avoids condemnation only because it is unbelievably dull and witless."

HIGH INFIDELITY Rating: C
A film of four separate episodes.

Produced by Gianni Hecht Lucari. Screenplay(s) by Age and Scarpelli, Scola and Maccari. Total running time 130 minutes. Distributed by Magna. Language: Italian (English subtitles).

Summary

1. THE SCANDAL. Directed by Franco Rossi. The story of a family on seashore vacation. The wife (Fulvia Franco) is still lovely but no longer young, and her husband (Nino Manfredi) is a routine man with routine dreams. An exhibitionistic beach boy shatters their world of complacency, awakening the wife to what she has missed and the husband to what he has failed to provide.

2. SIN IN THE AFTERNOON. Directed by Elio Petri. The casual affair of a lonely husband, who loves his distant wife, and a sophisticated woman (Claire Bloom) he meets. They make love and conversation and he (Charles Azvanour) returns to his wife that evening, who waits for him, her face hiding behind a huge mask.

3. THE VICTIM. Directed by Luciano Salce. A beautiful young wife (Monica Vitti) is insanely jealous of her husband, suspecting all his absences and believing none of his explanations. One day when she is alone she pours out her sufferings to her husband's friend (Jean-Pierre Cassel), who listens sympathetically and embraces her--sexually or fraternally?

4. MODERN PEOPLE. Directed by Mario Monicelli. A well-to-do cheese manufacturer (Ugo Tognazzi) loses all his money and possessions at gambling. His creditor (Bernard Blier) offers to cancel the debt if he can sleep with the debtor's beautiful wife (Michele Mercier). Furious, the debtor finally accepts and strives to overcome his wife's revulsion. She doesn't object and exceeds the needs of the contract gladly.

(Reference to episodes will be by number)

Critics

But what they all have in common is that beneath the overt sex play, the high comedy and the domestic chatter and the surprise ending [of each tale], there's a stringent revelation of character and a bit of moral to stay with you. 3, the least satisfying of the episodes . . . but stay, because the best comes last, 4 stands alone as a delightful comedy of very human errors, and as a glorious finale to the varied delights of High Infidelity.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, July 2, 1965.

Four zesty episodes distinguished now for lively direction, now for superior performances. Its format is a series of irregular triangles edged with homosexuality, fetishism, jealousy, and greed.
- Time, July 23, 1965.

Since the two duds come at the end, an audience would do well to depart after the second of the four parts--but that would leave it with half a show.
- Eugene Archer, The New York Times, July 2, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"The movie is clever, occasionally humorous, sometimes crass, and its morality will not be noticed by the imperceptive."
B:	2	"The casual attitude about sex relations, suggestive scenes, immodest dress."
C:	3	"This classification rests not only on the pervasive hyper-sexuality of the themes but also the contrived situations which enabled the producers to exploit suggestive costuming and nudity." - "Crude frankness . . . passionate lovemaking . . . immodest dress." - "[The bedroom scenes of 3 and 4 are] obviously calculated to arouse vehement sexual feelings in the audience."

The final published rating was C: "This four-part film about various forms of perversion not only fails to develop character because of the brevity of the parts, but is also frequently crude and suggestive in treatment. Thus lacking any moral sense which could give balance to its choice of subject matter, this attempt at ironic comedy succeeds only in being an exploitation of sordid stories."

THE PAWNBROKER Rating: C

Directed by Sidney Lumet. Produced by Roger H. Lewis and Philip Langner. Screenplay by David Friedkin and Morton Fine (from novel by Edward Lewis Wallant). Distributed by Allied Artists for Landau Co. 110 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Sol Nazerman (Rod Steiger) a middle-aged survivor of Auschwitz, where his wife and children were brutally murdered, is now a pawnbroker in Harlem. He lives a vegetable life, cut off from human emotions, trying to suppress memories of his married happiness and the horrors of the camp. He is deaf and blind to the violence and suffering of Harlem (he ignores a vicious gang-beating), rejects the filial affection of his eager young Puerto Rican assistant, shrugs off the tender interest of a female social worker of his own age. A series of emotional shocks reactivates those memories. The owner of the pawnshop (Brock Peters) is a gangster, living off the miseries of the poor. His assistant has his prostitute girl friend offer her body to him, which he refuses with embarrassment (he is reminded of his wife's degradation by Nazi officers). Finally his assistant is involved in a hold-up of the pawnshop. When the accomplices seem on the verge of killing the pawnbroker, the young Puerto Rican intervenes and is killed. The police arrive and, in a paroxysm of self-hate, the pawnbroker impales his hand on the receipt spike of his desk and walks away down the squalid street.

Critics

It is a picture of the shabbiness of man--of the misused, debilitated hero, as well as of those among whom he lives. And the whole thing is staged and presented to convey and emphasize the meanness of those environments that would breed such shabbiness. . . . [Lumet] might have cut out or held down some grim stretches that make for redundancy. But he and his sponsor, Ely Landau, are to be honored for even attempting this most uncommon film, which projects a disagreeable subject with power and cogency.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, April 21, 1965.

What is best about The Pawnbroker is Rod Steiger's portrayal of Sol Nazerman. . . . Somehow Steiger makes one accept this hardened man of advanced middle-age, once a scholar and a professor, who will admit only the reality of money at this point in his life. But beneath the surface, the anguish remains.
- Hollis Alpert, Saturday Review, April 3, 1965.

The film itself is a shockingly good one. [It] could easily have been just another tawdry, pseudo-documentary stroll through the slums--if it had not been superbly directed by Sidney Lumet and flawlessly acted by everyone down to the smallest snapshot role.
- Richard Oulahan, Life, April 2, 1965.

A superior and striking film.
- Arthur Sclesinger, Jr., Show, May 1965.

Its emotional impact--provided in large part by a brilliant and bravura performance by Rod Steiger--is such that many will overlook its imperfections. It is a harsh film and a compassionate one, achieving moments of unbearable cruelty and of total heartbreak. . . . [But] Lumet yields to sentimentality and stereotype and to his dichotomous penchant for both the arty and the slick.

-Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, April 21, 1965.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-IV:	2	"The several scenes of feminine nudity in this film cannot be placed in the usual category of exploitation. . . . The human spirit emerges at the end in a brilliant display of emotion." "In my judgment the film should go as A-III if the single nakedness scene is modified, otherwise, A-IV, to call attention to the departure from standard film reticence in a needless way, which adds little to a powerful and significant film. . . . [The same scene] taken from the rear . . . would have been just as effective and much less clinical."
C:	3	"Even if the nudity were deleted I would still rate the film as decadent art which stresses only pessimism." - "The scene between Jesus Ortiz and his girl in bed is too graphic and [so is] the scene where she offers herself to the pawnbroker. . . . The explicitness does not add to the story line, and could be passed over or redone more tastefully without any violence to the dramatic integrity." - "I would dearly love to give the film an A-IV rating, and would, were it not for the one nude scene."

The first published rating was C: "An acceptable classification has been denied this film for the sole reason that nudity has been used in its treatment. Although nudity is not in itself obscenity and might even have an artistic function in a film of quality, it is never a necessary or indispensable means to achieve dramatic effect. The present film is no exception because the director could have accomplished his artistic objectives by the less literal and more demanding method of indirection.

The good of the motion picture industry as well as the national community requires that a marked effort on the part of some producers to introduce nudity into film treatment be discouraged, for such treatment is open to the gravest of abuse."

The second published rating (Aug. 18, 1966) was A-III:
"In taking over general distribution of The Pawnbroker, American International has made sufficient revisions in the film's treatment to warrant a change of classification from the original C (Condemned) to A-III (morally unobjectionable for adults).
Once a film has received national distribution, any reclassification of it is precluded according to a general policy of the National Office. An exception to this policy has been made in the present case because of the film's extraordinary value.
Note: This classification is applicable only to prints shown in the U.S.A."

October 1965-October 1966

ALFIE Rating: A-IV

Directed and Produced by Lewis Gilbert. Screenplay by Bill Naughton (from Mr. Naughton's stage play). Distributed by Paramount. 114 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

The film uses first person narrative through the device of asides and voice-over narration from the main character, Alfie (Michael Caine). He is a casual womanizer, selfish, shallow, cruel, with the bland amiability of a nice guy. The women in his bed are never in his life, from the first, who has a child by him but marries another to give the child a true father. A young waif he picks up leaves him because he refuses to notice her. A middle-aged sexed-up widow leaves him for a younger more athletic partner. It is the wife of a fellow employee, taking a TB cure, who causes Alfie some pain, the pain of inconvenience. She (Vivien Merchant) aborts Alfie's child, filled with shame at her solitary unfaithfulness. While waiting for her to recover in his flat, Alfie takes a stroll and witnesses the baptism of his son from the shadows, the foster-father full of care and dear concern and happiness. Alfie laconically admits that he has not his peace of mind, but wanders on, unchanged.

Critics

There must be an abortion--a miserable and tragic thing, which Lewis Gilbert . . . makes us sense in all its shabbiness and shame.

. . . The whole thing is played expertly by everyone in the large cast.
- Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, Aug. 25, 1966.

Despite the fact that Alfie is in many respects a contemptible character . . . it is indisputable that the audiences will be *held* fascinated by gymnastics, which are not above ribaldry, will be [sic] viewed by adult film-goers as the source of endless amusement.
- Louis Pelegrine, *Film Daily*, Aug. 23, 1966.

Because of his [Caine's] performance, the film glistens with distinction.
- Arthur Knight, *Saturday Review*, Aug. 27, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-II:	1	"The story of this amoral stud is no different than that of Hogarth's rake or the prodigal son of the Bible."
A-III:	13	"This is an extremely tasteful film . . . [it] takes a moral stand on the question of love without responsibility or permanence." "Underlying strongly moral tone." - "An honest statement of a segment of life." - "The [promiscuous] acts are suggested rather than acted out." - "A man for no reason." "The light treatment which Alfie himself presented of his various sexual exploits and the various *double-entendre* remarks in the dialogue were, I think, adequately counterbalanced by the deeper message." - "The beginning of the end of Alfie's success is the attachment he develops for his illegitimate child."
A-IV:	21	"Alfie is broken but he is not sufficiently crushed by the sheer impact of what he has done. [This] is his peculiar tragedy." - "The film's strength morally is that while we are not led to sympathize unduly with Alfie, he cannot be judged and condemned either." - "I find little that is distasteful or immoral: whatever might have been is counteracted anyway." "A good movie about a bad man." - "The point of the film: 'I didn't mean to hurt you, Harry.'--'But you did all the same.'" "It's not the theme, it's the way you treat it. [In this film] the camera knows when to look the other way." - "My . . . reservation about

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		this type of film is that it deals with leading characters who have little human substance to begin with and still less when the picture ends." - "Immature audiences can be so influenced by the apparent good times as to overlook Alfie's message." "The movie exposes the raw nerves of loneliness and the awful arteries of fear which lie beneath the skin of a ruthless way of life."
B:	2	"Alfie had a ball, seemed to regret some of his actions at times, but never did anything to change for the better." - "Because of its low moral tone."

The final published rating was A-IV: "In presenting its story about a promiscuous young man who lives by the philosophy that he can take from life what he wants with no regrets and without hurting anyone, Alfie, in spite of its deceptively light treatment of several immoral situations, is a serious film which develops the unmistakable theme that to be human, an individual must accept responsibility for all his actions. Prospective audiences should be aware that because of its treatment this motion picture is not intended as casual entertainment."

LORD LOVE A DUCK   Rating: A-IV

Directed and Produced by George Axelrod. Screenplay by George Axelrod and Larry H. Johnson (from novel by Al Hine). Distributed by United Artists for Charleston Enterprises. 109 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A zany black comedy set in a plush California setting. Teenage Barbara Ann Greene (Tuesday Weld) has one ambition in life: to be loved by all. The product of a broken marriage between an aging hip mother who works as a bunny girl and lives on booze and pills and casual sex, and a doting boob of a father whose feelings for daughter are almost overtly incestuous, she finds that a genius fellow high school student, 'Mollymauk' Musgrave (Roddy McDowell), equally adept at physics, math, karate, psychoanalysis, can get her everything, including a husband, handsome and vacuous Marriage-and-Teen counselor Bob Barnard (Martin West). In a series of wacky satiric episodes that slash at modern education, pop Christianity, sex-education, momism, beach parties, and beach-party movies, Mollymauk finds that he has failed to make Barbara Anne happy--she does not like her husband. So he kills him--with a bulldozer.

Critics

Too much of the film's point is pursued with a bulldozer, not enough with the scalpel.

- Arthur Knight, Saturday Review, Feb. 12, 1966.

We're regretting the might-have-been's in a film that boasts three fine performances and several hilariously satiric scenes and comes a cropper through its inconsistencies, its smirky obscenities, and its ultimate unfunniness.

- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, Feb. 22, 1966.

Axelrod . . . never misses a trick in making the utmost of a situation. Sometimes there isn't any situation, merely a flock of beach lovelies in their scantiest, but otherwise Axelrod accomplishes good theatre.

- Variety, Jan. 19, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	2	"The story captures what people do and reports what they say . . . painfully accurate."
A-IV:	2	"A modern morality play done in 'kooky' style. [But] the suicide of the girl's mother is done seriously and thus makes the satirical scenes preceding and following it doubly distasteful." - "Some bits border on genius, others are in plain bad taste."
B:	3	"At first the audience is inclined to see the murder attempts as humorous. . . . When we come to realize that [in fact] it is a vicious murder, it is disturbing . . ." "The Bikini and similar scenes [should be cut]." "The costuming and dancing of the beach scene."

The final published rating was A-IV: "Under the guise of comedy, occasionally black, this film presents a biting commentary on the vague and meaningless lives of a certain segment of contemporary American society. Because its style is obscure, even some adult viewers will find the film confusing and certain elements in the treatment may strike them as needlessly sensational. The cast would suggest that this is a film for young people; it cannot be approved for them."

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? Rating: A-IV

Directed by Mike Nichols. Produced by Ernest Lehman. Screen adaptation of Edward Albee play by Ernest Lehman. Distributed by Warner Bros. 131 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

The conversation and 'party games' of two couples during an all night drinking session at home and at a roadside inn. George and Martha (Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor) play host to a younger couple, Nick and Honey (George Segal and Sandy Dennis). George is a middle-aged tired academic failure, cynical and fed up with his professorship, himself, and his wife. Martha is a tough harridan who loathes her own promiscuity and is ashamed of her barrenness and her husband. Nick is a capable square on the make, handsome, intelligent, shallow and selfish. His wife is a neurotic child. In the course of the evening, when everything is dragged out into the open, sex, hate, self-pity, despair, and ambition, both couples learn more about their own brand of emptiness and the strange love-hate of the older couple rings true and sad.

Critics

That /the film/ should be less satisfactory than /the stage play/ . . . is perhaps to be expected. Furthermore, our disappointment is tempered with recognition that for all its faults, it does represent a vital extension of the boundaries that restrict Hollywood movie-making and succeeds at least in leaving us with the impression of having experienced the painful realities of Albee's purgative party.

- Henry Hewes, Saturday Review, July 9, 1966.

It . . . sets a new standard in bringing to the screen scenes of raw candor and language of uninhibited daring. . . . Nichols directed it in dazzling theatrical style, now disciplined, now violent. . . . Shattering and incredible as the story is in its audacious corruption, it ends on a note of deep and believable poignancy.

- Film Daily, June 23, 1966.

What was, on the stage, little more than a loud clash of badly orchestrated symbols signifying very little has become, on the screen, a drama of character and characters--a story about people who, you are surprised to discover, you genuinely care about and sympathize with as damned and suffering human beings.

- Richard Schickel, Life, July 22, 1966.

It is a grim, sordid, penetrating, emotionally powerful picture, owing nothing to the play's foul language that a writer as skillful as Lehman couldn't have accomplished without it.

- William R. Weaver, Motion Picture Daily, June 22, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots
Summary: (91 ballots were cast in all)

A-II - 1
A-III - 9
A-IV -44
B -14
C -18

Undecided - 1
Undecided between A-III and A-IV: 1
" " A-IV and B : 2
" " B and C : 1

Selected quotations from ballots

One A-III ballot suggested that NCOMP give a positive recommendation of the film: "It is a brilliantly tragic revelation of the sadness and powers of deception within the human heart and if any film deserves a positive recommendation, this one does. . . . The language and vulgar references of this film . . . poses a problem for NCOMP that goes beyond this film. If NCOMP wants to stand for a set of mechanical rules that are absolute, then it must take refuge in the special classification [A-IV] to pass on a film of obvious merits, not the least of which is its moral merit. But I think that this film offers a timely occasion to take a stand for artistic and humanistic standards that cannot be pinned down to a manual of do's and dont's."

One A-IV ballot attacked the concept of classification: "Classification represents an essentially Platonic view of the common man as corrupt and untrustworthy and incapable of self-betterment or wise choice. . . . It doesn't make any sense to be Platonist in contemporary U.S. society however, and the organization [viz., NCOMP] has become increasingly Aristotelian. But trying to make Aristotelian judgments fit an essentially Platonic structure has simply compounded confusion. I really mean it when I say that I think we do more harm than good every time we classify a film."

A-II: "One of our finest and most rewarding moments of theatre. . . . The one possible difficulty concerns the use of the Lord's name. . . . But if we approach this use [of the name] as the users do, both in life and literature, then we may conclude that even use or abuse of the Deity's name is another exposition of life through language."

A-III: "A masterpiece from an artistic point of view." - "Reasonably well done . . . [but] the one dance scene was very suggestive." "Disquieting, but morally sound."

A-IV: "I don't feel that a major criticism can be directed at the film on the grounds of insincere and flamboyant techniques, especially since the general level of Albee's dialogue . . . is quite brilliant." - "False values . . . are depicted as false." "[Vulgarity] of the verbal expressions inheres thematically in the drama . . . not in any way a compromise to sensationalism [sic]." "Adult viewers will and must end up judging for themselves whether the presentation is aesthetically and morally acceptable to them." "A strongly symbolic film dealing with truth and illusion . . ." "Lear and Falstaff are 'profane and obscene'. . . . There is a canonical definition of obscenity, but can we, must we, or should we apply it here?" - "Hamlet shocked all the Cromwellian Puritans and shocks nobody today, and some of Aristophanes shocks everybody today and did not, apparently, shock the Greeks. Man is changeable . . . Word prudery is so universal a mob-habit that it is time we were startled out of it." - "Content justifies what would otherwise be objectionable." "Valid adult entertainment, though it will not appeal to all adult tastes." - "The film is a fine one, but because of its theme and treatment it should be recommended to only a mature and discriminating audience." - "Unless we want to play ostrich, we must admit that there are far too many people similarly caught . . . in life." - "Tedious . . . There may be less here than meets the eye." - "A fine production of a basically fraudulent work [but] adults are neither harmed nor shocked [by this sort of film]." - "Certainly the average movie-goer should be warned about the vulgarity of language contained in this film, but we should be able to communicate this information without having to resort to a B or C."

B: "I do not go along with the theory that craftsmanship, plus acting, will redeem any picture. . . . [George and Martha] practice [psychological] masochism. And that is something I do not think should be placed before the general public." - "Replete with indecent remarks." - "If we ignore the frequent and blasphemous use of the sacred name we are opening the perennial flood gates."

C: "This film will convey the impression to many adolescents and young adults that the behaviour here is acceptable, if not usual, by persons [George is a professor] who guide and counsel them." "Profane, vulgar, irreverent, and suggestive." - "The theme is dishonest." - "Burton and Taylor will attract the wrong audience." "Much better suited for the mature theatre, not the immature mass media." - "After all you condemn nudity on principle. I think blasphemy is more serious."

The final published rating was A-IV: "This film is a substantially faithful rendition of the well-known contemporary and controversial play by Edward Albee. In depicting the anguish and bitterness experienced by a married couple as they confront the illusions which have poisoned their life together, Ernest Lehman's production of Virginia Woolf dramatizes man's need to face the challenge of reality in order, by achieving self-knowledge, to build a capacity for love.

"In its presentation of this adult motion picture Warner Brothers has adopted the commendable policy that no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to a viewing of the film unless accompanied by his parent. Adults must also be advised that the theme of Virginia Woolf may prove confusing and its language offensive to the casual film-goer."

AN AMERICAN DREAM — Rating: B

Directed by Robert Gist. Produced by William Conrad. Screenplay by Mann Rubin (from the novel by Norman Mailer). Distributed by Warner Bros. 107 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A gangster melodrama with acid dialogue. Steve Rojack (Stuart Whitman), a TV muckraking commentator, has a violent verbal and physical battle with his wife, Deborah (Eleanor Parker), daughter of the eighth richest man in the U.S. (Lloyd Nolan). The brawl ends in her falling thirty stories to her death, where her corpse is further mauled by a car. The police sadistically browbeat Whitman to admit he killed his wife, while the Mafia, the object of his exposes, plots his death. Just after Rojack admits to his father-in-law that he did indeed engage in a brawl with Deborah, he meets death in a hail of Mafia bullets.

Critics

What surely must be the most ferocious, uninhibited, and no-holds-barred brawl between a husband and wife on screen (not even excepting Virginia Woolf) gets . . . [this film] off to a sizzling start. . . . In essence, . . . a modern gangster melodrama with the hero pursued both by the police and hoodlums in traditional grooves.
- Richard Gertner, Motion Picture Daily, Aug. 25, 1966.

Robert Gist directs at the constantly hysterical pitch of a neurotic trapped in a phone booth. . . . [Rojack's death] is just the kind of pious ending Mailer avoided--and Hollywood uses as a moral pretext for exploiting all that is sadistic and cynical in the book they bought.
- Newsweek, Sept. 5, 1966.

. . . technicolored claptrap, which mixes standard gangster fare with soul-searching liverwurst.
- Howard Thompson, The New York Times, Sept. 1, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	5	"Promiscuity is taken for granted . . . not for children or adolescents." - "Painfully dull." - "Morbid" "It was such an inferior piece as to be indifferent to morality."
B:	3	"Nudity and suggestive opening scene . . . seduction sequence." "The overall depressing quality it exudes."

The final published rating was B: "The theme of this shallow story, purporting to be a comment on American mores, is vitiated by its patently false use of sex and violence."

THE BLUE MAX   Rating: B

Directed by John Guillermin. Produced by Christian Ferry. Screenplay by Gerald Hanley, David Pursall and Jack Seddon (from novel by Jack D. Hunter). Distributed by 20th Century-Fox. 156 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A super-spectacle of World War I aerial dogfights mixed with personal drama of two German fighter aces. Bruno Stachel (George Peppard) plays a lower-class infantryman who gets transferred to the glamourous fighter squadron in order to rise in social stature. He enters into a friendly, but deeply felt, rivalry with the resident ace, Willi Von Klugermann (Jerry Kemp), who holds "The Blue Max," the high German award Pour Le Merit, and is a blooded member of the aristocracy as well. The nephew of the commanding general (James Mason), Willi is also the lover of the general's young and promiscuous wife. Bruno, after a long struggle, out-aces Willi, wins his woman (after Willi dies trying to outstunt Bruno) and is taken to Berlin as a hero for public relations reasons. In Berlin, he almost misses death by not being chosen to fly a new plane that is actually a death trap. Heidemann, Bruno's squadron leader and a man of impeccable honor, is chosen by the General and is about to be sent to his death, in order to save Bruno for propaganda uses. At the last minute, the General changes his mind--Bruno is a greater hero dead than alive. He dies.

Critics

With the technological improvements [in filming] of the years, the skies were never bluer or wider; the war in the air or on the ground never more realistic. . . . The question each filmgoer will have to ask himself is how much of what is bad in The Blue Max is he willing to take in exchange for what is good. Much of the earthbound drama of this lengthy film is tangled, confusing, clumsy.
- Robert Alden, The New York Times, June 22, 1966.

Diffuse and emotionally flat despite its expert airborne excitement, The Blue Max sets out to be a caustic essay on honor, ends up posing questions no more timeless and universal than Who will get Ursula (the general's wife played by Ursula Andress)?
- Time, July 8, 1966.

Instead of the deeper tensions of tragedy we have a mere melodrama of misunderstanding. And all this irresolution, in turn, makes his [Bruno's] ultimate destruction pointless.
- Richard Schickel, Life, July 8, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	1	"The character of Bruno Stachel is so well defined that the viewer alternately hates and pities him. . . . With this background it is easy to allow the showing of his relationship with the countess (although there is a slight tendency to glamorize the scenes in bed)."
A-IV:	1	"An interesting film though it seemed to me that the adultery and nudity were unnecessary and in bad taste."
B:	5	"I'd rate it as A-I save for the two [adultery] scenes." "The Blue Max deserves its own medal. Too bad it had to be tarnished [by the adultery scenes]." - "It is most unfortunate that the producers felt the need to go so explicitly into erotic detail . . ." - "The gratuitious sex and nudity were needless and offensive. . . . War is not glorified in any way by this film, thank God."
C:	2	"Two explicitly erotic scenes which, at best, are tangential to the plot." - "Those two scenes."

A special release was given out with the final published rating B: The National Catholic office for Motion Pictures announced today that the Twentieth Century-Fox motion picture THE BLUE MAX had been given a B rating (morally objectionable in part for all), with the following objection noted: "Two grossly explicit scenes of love-making have no place in a motion picture which is being widely advertised by its distributor as an action film about World War I fighter pilots with the clear implication that it is suitable for general audiences. The graphic depiction of the sexual encounters is dramatically unjustifiable for the adult viewer and can be seriously harmful to young audiences." The extensive advertising campaign, which centers on a machine-gunning airplane pilot, is not only appearing in the national press but is also scheduled for publications such as Boys Life and Sunday newspaper comic sections, which have a special appeal to young people. The National Office noted that this advertising will be misleading, particularly to parents, who will be led to expect that their children will be seeing simply an air-action thriller. If the producer and distributor of the film should maintain that they are presenting a film for mature audiences, social responsibility would demand that they advertise it as such. In the absence of any such notification of audience acceptability, the current advertising campaign only compounds the irresponsible treatment noted in the above objection to the film.

THE GROUP Rating: B

Directed by Sidney Lumet. Produced by Sidney Buchman. Screenplay by Sidney Buchman (from novel by Mary McCarthy). Distributed by United Artists. 150 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

As faithful to the novel as the time-limited film can be, this film narrates the lives and loves and problems of eight Vassar graduates. Their leader, a stunning Lesbian named Lakey (Candice Bergen) appears at length only at the beginning and end of the film which starts with the wedding of Kay (Joanna Pettet) and ends with her funeral after her suicide. Too episodic to summarize, the film goes through the decade of the 1930's and treats the problem of the "emancipated woman" in relation to marriage, career, wealth, birth control, political life, and just plain sex.

Critics

Here is a case of over-fidelity to a source proving disastrous. A novelist . . . can keep eight major characters in focus with ease; neither the author or viewer of this movie can. Motivations and dimensions go by the board as we whirl from girl to girl. . . . All the references to the era--its politics, its passions, its crises--become as artificial and unnecessary as the period sets and costuming.
- Judith Crist, The New York Herald Tribune, March 20, 1966.

Lumet has directed in a styleless welter of blurry impulse and half-baked set pieces. His whipsaw cutting among eight lives is irritating, and he has allowed a musty thrift-shop nostalgia in DeLuxe color to overwhelm both his material and his performers.
- Newsweek, March 21, 1966.

The film . . . succeeds as a suds opera far superior to the ordinary household brand. Sharply written . . . it is directed with lively, Roosevelt-period flavor . . . and played with giddy, gossipy, delicious girlishness by a group of captivating young actresses who rediscover the '30's like Junior Leaguers unleashed at an antiques fair.
- Time, March 11, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	13	"Morally speaking, the film producer [sic] used discretion when dealing with sexual promiscuity." "Tasteful and rather poignant." - "Promiscuity in itself is neither focused upon nor glamorized." - "I would recommend that the two scenes in bed be somewhat cut. Both of them are unnecessarily prolonged and all of this with no real need." - "The film makes no explicit moral comment on the actions and attitudes it portrays." "Giving artistic shape to sordid human episodes and describing the results of imprudence and the conflicts which wrongdoing produces or by means of which it advances can presumably be worthwhile."
A-IV:	14	"Some of the love-making and nudity should be toned down." "The movie does portray life quite rawly in places . . . and the situations are unfortunately quite plausible." "My suggested rating of A-IV is intended to demand of the viewer a deeper penetration into the reasons for the actions of the characters."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		- "The characters wear the stigma of their digression from the straight and narrow." "Scenes and subject matter might shock even a few adults." ". . . not that there is any moral objection to the treatment, but merely to advise those who might be unwary of the contents." The subjects treated . . . are relative commonplaces in adult debate today." - "Brutal, frank, and not at all moving." "The message is ultimately moral."
B:	13	"The Daily News, on practically any day, duplicates the same details in the real lives of people . . . in fact, the film presents a visual aid in how to go about it." "The main emphasis revolves around the sexual lives of the group." - "In applying my most ingenuous yardstick, is good presented attractively?--is wrongdoing shown eventually as harmful?--the answer is no." - "It is definitely opposed to Christian ideals and principles." "The objectionable parts are (1) the undressing scene and the scene on the bed early in the picture and (2) the bed scene later in the picture." - "I don't feel that the film presented free love in an attractive light. However, it certainly was preoccupied with it and this in itself might be unsalutary."
C:	4	"I do object to the fact that movie makers insist on putting people into bed in order to get other people into the theatre." "Merely a series of immoral episodes, unrelated and purposeless. The film, on the whole, was completely demoralizing." "The epitome of moral depravity and aberration . . . no sincerity, kindness, or love reflected by anyone in the group toward one another. [sic]"

The final published rating was B: "Numerous erotic elements in the treatment of this film are unduly emphasized and are without dramatic necessity for the telling of the story."

OH DAD, POOR DAD, MAMMA'S HUNG YOU IN THE CLOSET
AND I'M FEELING SO SAD Rating: B

Directed by Richard Quine. Produced by Ray Stark and Stanley Rubin. Screenplay by Ian Bernard (from play by Arthur L. Kopit). Distributed by Paramount for Seven Arts. 96 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A highly stylized and bizarre production: Madame Rosepettle (Rosalind Russell) flying her very own Fairchild Boxcar, with her whey-faced and neurotic son (Robert Morse), lands on a tropic island and drives her very own fancy jeep out the ramp, leading a string of ornate trailers, one of which carries the stuffed corpse of her late husband (Jonathan Winters). Mythically wealthy, she commandeers a luxury suite at a resort and commences to vamp a retired and reluctant satyr, Commodore Roseabove (Hugh Griffith), leaving strict orders that her son, emotionally 12 and physically 25, not be allowed to leave their apartment. He is attracted however by the ambiguous charms of Rosalie (Barbara Harris) an unlikely combination of wholesome girl-next-door and ravenous sexpot who wishes to free him from the fantastic domination of his Goddess mother through frequent intercourse. Dad, stuffed and stored in the closet, falls out on them when she is about to deflower the stammering youth. In a rage of repressed hate for his mother, he strangles Rosalie, whom he imagines as her. Meanwhile, Mama has alternatively teased and frustrated the Commodore quite literally to death. They drive off with three new stuffed corpses, Dad, the Commodore, and Rosalie. Junior asks if Mother will let him keep Rosalie's corpse in his room. She indulgently consents. The end. Throughout, the disembodied voice of Dad, presumably looking on from heaven, makes acid comments about his wife and encouraging remarks about Junior, hoping sarcastically that he will break loose.

Critics

It struggles too hard to be outlandish. It labors to be as prolix with sight gags and screwball behaviour as the title is with words. . . . It is eerie and ghoulish too. . . . The comedy is not so black as it is bleak.

- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, Feb. 16, 1967.

[This film was reviewed by NCOMP in August of 1966]

Oh Dad, Poor Dad . . . has been in the can for more than a year. Why it has been taken out we can but guess. . . . What [i.e., Kopit's stage play] was a youthful and imaginative bit of I-hate-momism, given sophisticated staging by Jerome Robbins, emerges as a shrill and unrelieved diatribe on a Dick-and-Jane level delivered with all the glittering polish and suave subtlety of a Three Stooges short.

- Judith Crist, The New York World Journal Tribune, Feb. 16, 1967.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	5	". . . some of the scenes would not be good for teenagers." "In any event, while I may not agree with

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		the morality of the film, I find little to quarrel with except the one scene of seduction." - ". . . the farcical treatment . . . had little, if any, moral impact." - "An extraordinary artistic failure."
A-IV:	6	"The tone of an absurd drama relieves us of the onus of deciding on its moral advocacy--it advocates nothing. The sole moral problem is one of treatment. Rosalie is a sex bomb, no doubt about it . . . too strong for adolescents. . . . Shock is not a sin. Yet, since this type of film is relatively new, and will confuse the uninformed, I believe it should receive A-IV." - "[The film attacks those who] don't know how to acquire a healthy view on [sex], so they hide behind a kind of prurient facade (which ultimately is more evil than a natural exuberance in the matter)." "[Seduction] scene seemed to be the only place where such exploitation [of sex] took place."
B:	22	"The introduction of humor into an otherwise salacious scene does not shield the viewer from potential harm." "It is analogous to the situation of telling an adolescent to think up as many foul phantasms as he can--then collect [sic] these--then present them in some sort of medium of entertainment." - "The attempted seduction of the thumb-sucking Hippolytus by a fleshy nymph is needlessly detailed and extended for the purposes of the conceit at hand, [yet] it is also a frequently brilliant and terribly funny entertainment." - "The subject is sexual frustration. The problem is that such a subject, so treated, is apt to impinge upon one or other moral issue. . . . The theme is a dirty joke." - "The film's suggestion that fornication will be a cure for whatever ails the son is objectionable." "The unnecessarily suggestive seduction scene." "*Virginia Woolf* and *Poor Dad* are worlds apart. The former is raw, relentless, but true, and touched with compassion. . . . [But] the sick humor that pervades this film borders on the indecent. I rarely use the latter term but it seems to fit the insensitive, incoherent, and blind fury underlying this film." "The film does not imply that the behaviour shown is bizarre, but that the true nature of sex is bizarre. . . ." ". . . it relied on tasteless, sensational side effects to hide a rather unimportant film." - "The film's

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
		one-note tune revels to the last in Mama and son's sick relationship. What is sick is never funny." - "A more depressing and depraved plot would be hard to find."
C:	4	". . . an excessive distortion of traditional values . . . strongly object to the two lengthy seduction scenes." "'A perfect delight' if one could judge in a moral vacuum." "It seems to make mockery of love, marriage, and sex . . . I also think it does considerable damage and injustice to the emotionally disturbed."

The final published rating was B: "This black comedy about "Momism" tends to be more sick and offensive than funny. Moreover, some of its treatment is tasteless and even prurient."

THE SILENCERS Rating: B

Directed by Phil Karlson. Produced by Irving Allen. Screenplay by Oscar Saul (from novels The Silencers and Death of a Citizen by Donald Hamilton). Distributed by Columbia for Meadway-Claude. 103 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

A reluctant and retired super-agent of ICE (Intelligence and Central Espionage), Matt Helm (Dean Martin), is finally wheedled away from his continuous sex life and gadget-dominated pad to thwart the evil plan of OO to divert a U.S. missile to an atomic test site and flood the country with fall-out. In the process he meets new sex partners in the form of lavishly endowed spies, dupes, stripteasers, and glamourous nymphomaniacs. He also meets new gadgets in the form of guns that fire backwards, coat buttons that act as grenades, poison gas phone booths: Not much different from his life in satyr retirement, but with a little danger thrown in. He overcomes evil (crime) in the end.

Critics

Martin approaches the role of Matt Helm in his patented relaxed, amiable, hard-drinking, somewhat adolescent, let's-catch-smoke-in-the-back-of-the-barn style of play, sings some song parodies via stream of

consciousness and dream sequences and generally adds to the merriment. Much use is made of a bevy of beauties--Stella Stevens, Daliah Lavi, Cyd Charisse, Nancy Kovack and others in and out of bed and bath and via strip-tease dances.
- Edward Lipton, *Film Daily*, Feb. 9, 1966.

The Silencers, packed with gorgeous dames, electrifying moments and imaginative plottage, may be reckoned to hit top grosses, particularly with its built-in exploitation potential.
- *Variety*, Feb. 9, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	9	"Vulgar and amoral" - "Very scanty and immodest costumes and dancing and many suggestive remarks. . . ." - "Successive strip acts during the credits and extreme exposures at the end . . . unnecessary and highly suggestive." - "The plot is nothing more than a crude cover up for a lot of uncovered females." "It goes the furthest in suggestiveness and obscenity of any film produced by a major American company." - "His bedroom . . . too much like Hugh Hefner's." - "Intentionally sexy without any dramatic necessity."
C:	6	"Direct girlie show." - "The entire structure is flimsy and tasteless." - "It's only concerned with bodies. It doesn't shock, it merely disgusts." - "Sex in the [James] Bond releases are always spoofs whereas here they are played for relishment [sic] and enjoyment of the principals." - "Only a single *entendre*."

The final published rating was B: "While making a slight pretense at being a light-hearted and comic spoof of the current mania for spy stories, this film tends in fact to be a vulgar burlesque show, highlighting suggestive costuming, erotic dancing and gross situations."

THE SWINGER

Rating: B

Directed and Produced by George Sidney. Screenplay by Lawrence Roman. Distributed by Paramount. 81 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Kelly Olsson (Ann-Margaret) is a teen-age aspirant for magazine writing. Because of her physical endowments, however, the Hugh Hefnerish editor (Tony Franciosa) she applies to decides to use her as a pin-up model. Living in a fantastic youth hostel that features wall-to-wall watusi and a practically resident vice-squad sergeant with an avuncular interest in the kiddies, Kelly decides to write a lewd and fictional autobiography in order to win the inverse respect of the editor. An orgy is staged for his benefit, and a mock seduction is tried by Kelly on the editor himself. She finally stars in a genuine burlesque strip-tease. Many bumps and grinds later, Kelly's idiot parents discover their little girl was merely indulging in a passing phase: Good clean fun. Robert Coote, Franciosa's publisher, plays an impotent lamb in sexpot wolfskin, for comic relief.

Critics

"One seldom gets rich by being wholesome, you know," Robert Coote remarks early in The Swinger. If there's gold in them thar unwholesomenesses, this raucous and raunchy little movie ought to make a mint with the strong-stomach crowd.

- Judith Crist, The New York World Journal Tribune, Dec. 15, 1966.

When Miss Margret pretends to be bad she is not very good, but when she tries to be good she is horrid. . . . "It's just like My Fair Lady," someone burbles, but no, it's more like My Foul Lady or Nasty Marietta, trying to look dirty and sound clean, succeeding at neither and ending up as a slight smudge on the face of decency.

- Newsweek, Dec. 26, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
B:	10	"I say senseless and tasteless because the film attempts to insult sex, to do dirt on it, and in so doing comes as near to pornography as American producers dare go." - "A desperate effort is made to liven up the film with every sexy cliche in the book. . . . Because of all the obvious attempts to pander to carnal appetites, a rating of B is generous." - "The picture really deserves a C. However, to place it in this category might help popularize a real [sic] stupid film." "Utterly without redeeming social value." - "A monstrous monument to tastelessness." - "Bankrupt imagination manipulating experience of 13-year olds."

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
C:	20	"The content is the illogical, bizarre, pathetic, and dangerous erotic fantasy of a young American girl (12 to 16, give or take a year), who is barraged with training bras and grammar school proms. And most despicably this is the market . . . the perpetrators of this gaudy puke have in mind." - "Sensuality for its own sake." - "A girlie show." - "A stag movie." "The subterfuge of innocence masking as debauchery is Hollywood at its most dishonest." - "An unmitigated collection of animated hard-core pornography." - "Catastrophically occupied with sex and makes little sense even as a spoof." "A serious occasion of sin for the very audience at which it is particularly aimed--the teenagers." - "As trite and lewd as might be expected." - "Leering, sexual exploitation."

The final published rating was B: "The obvious sexual exploitation of the principal character of this film tends to add up to nothing more than an exercise in deliberate sensationalism."

TORN CURTAIN Rating: B

Directed and Produced by Alfred Hitchcock. Screenplay by Brian Moore. Distributed by Universal. 128 minutes. Language: English.

Summary

Nuclear physicist Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman), an American at a convention in Europe with his young fiance (Julie Andrews) is under instructions to 'defect' in East Berlin in order to discover a new secret from the proud and eccentric professor (Ludwig Donath) who works for the Other Side. In the course of his adventures, which assume the form and style of a grand chase, Armstrong has to make his fiance think he really has defected, slay a professional East German secret agent, hoodwink the professor, and escape by devious routes involving a ballet performance and a bogus bus ride.

Critics

[Hitchcock] is so badly burdened with a blah script by Brian Moore and a hero and heroine . . . who seem to miss the point, that he has

come up with a film that plows through grimly, without any real surprises, suspense or fun. . . . The strongest episode--the most spontaneous and engaging--is the secret killing of a security guard, . . . who is harder to kill than Rasputin, and the deftness with which they [Newman and Carolyn Conwell] dispatch him are the most exciting details of the film. . . . The scene of [Newman and Andrews making love] under the covers at the beginning of the film--a scene as harmless as it is now notorious--is a fraud. They never get that close again.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, July 28, 1966.

[The killing of the German agent] is, I think, one of the most memorably grotesque fights I have ever seen on film. . . . [It] is obviously not a scene for the squeamish, but it is a great, even a classic, Hitchcock scene. . . . [But in this film as a whole] Hitchcock fails through lack of ambition and that is saddening.
- Richard Schickel, Life, Aug. 26, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III:	3	"One of the best Hitchcock's to come along in quite a while." "Julie Andrews and Paul Newman in bed together [serves] . . . no purpose . . . particularly violent scene [of killing] a police agent. . . . In view of this, for Adults Only." - "Gory and gruesome killing of Gromek [is] . . . in bad taste."
B:	5	"Totally unnecessary love-making scene." - "Excellent entertainment for adolescents, but one indecent scene (sex) puts the entire film out of bounds." - "The brutal murder of Gromek is not justified dramatically."

The final published rating was B: "This predictable suspense film is morally flawed by the gratuitous introduction of pre-marital sex between its sympathetic protagonists. Questionable also on moral grounds is the detailed treatment of a realistically brutal killing. The presentation of his 50th film should have merited congratulations for Mr. Hitchcock, it is with regret then that NCOMP is compelled instead to censure him for the disheartening lack of social responsibility to general audiences manifested on this occasion. Parents should be aware that the "Mary Poppins" image of the female lead (Julie Andrews), shattered in this film, cannot serve as any criterion of the film's acceptability for their children."

LE BONHEUR Rating: C

Directed by Agnes Varda. Produced by Mag Bodard-Parc-Film. Screenplay by Agnes Varda. Distributed by Columbia for Clover Films. 87 minutes. Language: French (English subtitles).

Summary

A simple tale lyrically told. A young French carpenter Francois (Jean-Claude Drouot) leads a calmly happy life with his wife and children, delighting in the countryside on weekend picnics. He meets another woman and falls in love, not losing his love for his wife, whom he tells of the affair. She commits suicide. Without remorse, he marries the other woman, who is accepted by the children, and they all go out to the country on weekends. The dead are forgotten.

Critics

Miss Varda, perhaps with tongue-in-cheek, has fashioned a simple fable for our time that is highly unlikely and blithely flouts moral values and Hollywood conventions but, nevertheless, constantly captivates the eye and mind, if not the heart.

- A. H. Weiler, The New York Times, May 24, 1966.

Adultery seems to be a favorite theme with ex-New Wavers here. . . . Film does not stump for polygamy here but tries to show a case where love blossoms for two people.

- Variety, March 3, 1965.

It is the case history--curious, comely, refreshingly original but never really compelling--of a seeming psychopath who claims--eloquently but ambiguously--to be in love with two women, when his emotional responses are so shallow he cannot even love one.

- Newsweek, June 13, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-III	1	"I found Miss Varda's point of view to be non-erotic and truthful to her way of telling the story.

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-IV:	2	"Since no explanation is offered there may be a wide range of misinterpretation. [The point seems to be] the gap between male and female sensibilities." "It is a very beautiful film, unpretentious in presentation, unfortunately burdened with a shoddy philosophy, however lightly."
B:	1	"If the three shots of the wife and mistress in bed with bare breasts [sic] were cut, I would rate it A-IV."
C:	11	"May lead to the erroneous idea that the basic idea [one wife + one mistress to a customer] is valid. . . . too nude." "Capitalize[s] on the nudity." - "Propaganda for polygamy." "Excessive undress" - "A philosophy which depicts happiness as the total submission to nature, when nature means exclusively the inclination of the senses." - "[Francois'] definition of 'bonheur' is not being presented by Miss Varda as the normative one, [but] the film becomes enmeshed in the very viewpoint it is trying to examine."

The final published rating was C: "Despite its extraordinary visual beauty, this film presents serious moral problems both in theme and in treatment. The theme that happiness consists in submitting to the order of nature, where 'nature' means exclusively the inclination of the senses is patently immoral and unrealistic. If the director intends the contrary, any ironic commentary implied is much too subtle, to be grasped by the normally perceptive viewer.
In treatment the explicit depiction of lovemaking and numerous instances of nudity go beyond the limits of decency."

LA FUGA Rating: C

Directed by Paolo Spinola. Produced by Vittorio Musy Glori, Alberto Casati, Mario Mariani. Screenplay by Sergio Amidei with Prof. Piero Bellanova (from an idea by Paolo Spinola and Carla Conti). Distributed by 20th Century-Fox for International Classics. Language: Italian (English subtitles).

Summary

Giovanna Ralli plays a young wife who craves affection, denied her as a young child, and not forthcoming from her nuclear scientist husband, too caught up in his work. The birth of her child only points up her inadequacies as a wife and mother. Through dream sequences her desire to escape (la fuga) her responsibilities are portrayed graphically, particularly through frustrated attempts to catch a train. A psychiatrist helps her somewhat, but it is only when she meets another woman (Anouk Aimee), an interior decorator, that she finds the affection she craves. The woman is a lesbian and the relationship deteriorates. The marriage is destroyed but the young woman flees again from the arms of the lesbian. A perpetual flight.

Critics

Giovanna Ralli is most believable as the woman. . . . [The director] weaves dream and flashback sequences skillfully. . . . The performances are uniformly excellent.
- Sy Oshinsky, Motion Picture Daily, March 18, 1966.

It is a handsomely photographed picture . . . but it is heavily and clumsily constructed. [Spinola] should have given it more tension and more pace and perhaps a little more intellectual balance.
- Bosley Crowther, The New York Times, March 22, 1966.

NCOMP Ballots

Rating	Number of ballots	Selected quotations from ballots
A-IV:	1	"Two scenes involving some nudity are sexually stimulating. . . . The earlier and briefer of these scenes is critical, integral, and strategic [for the story], but less so is the second and lengthier one. It is not in fact indispensible, this aspect of the tale having been by this time largely told."
B:	2	"Both [erotic] scenes were unnecessary . . . [and] quite jarring in that they did not fit in with the pattern of restraint shown in the rest of the film." - "[except for these scenes] an effective morality play."
C:	3	"Two sequences too vivid and suggestive." - "Because the homosexuality is too explicit." - ". . . started out to tell an honest story . . . but went commercial with the [erotic] scenes [whose] impact is a sickening thud."

The final published rating was C: "In this psychiatric study of a disturbed woman, the major subject matter is lesbianism. The explicitly graphic treatment accorded certain sequences is not only totally unnecessary to a valid development of the film's theme, but also borders on the obscene."

Underlying Criteria of Ratings

From the sample films and the consultors' judgments on them, one can draw the conclusion that it is basically treatment, not theme, that determines the B category. Salacious scenes, suggestive dialogue, partial nudity, any treatment that is sexually stimulating, can bring about a B rating. Violence and cruelty are much more easily tolerated. It is true that the brutal murder scene in Torn Curtain contributed to its B rating. But the violence of The Collector, although more subtle, is just as brutal--and patently sadistic as well. It is the fact that Torn Curtain opens with "Mary Poppins" Julie Andrews in bed with Paul Newman that determined the B.

Apart from the automatic C given to films with total frontal nudity (bare backsides were tolerated in The Bible), theme is the determining element in the C and A-IV categories. The presence of a serious theme will encourage NCOMP to overlook salacious treatment because the treatment is seen as integral to a story or point of view and not as a self-conscious bit of exploitation. Thus the beach sex orgy of Lord Love a Duck is accepted because of its alleged satirical intent, whereas the comparatively sedate bedroom sex of The Blue Max is rejected because of its apparent inconsistency with the overall theme of a film about flying, courage, and social climbing. On the other hand, it is not treatment that is the determining factor in causing condemnation of a film. Le Bonheur has torrid love scenes, but so does The Servant. The former was condemned because of its alleged theme that happiness is an animal contentment that does not require responsibility for others. The latter was accepted because it shows that sex without love is degrading.

La Fuga and The Silence were condemned for a combination of graphic sexual treatment and unacceptable themes. Here, the themes were rejected not so much because they were felt to be invalid or insincere, but because they were deemed too clinical and esoteric for the film medium. These are the only two films in the sample which reveal in a direct way the old Legion concern for "the masses."

Weekend and High Infidelity were condemned also for reasons of theme. In cases like this, it was because NCOMP considers the theme to be so unserious, so patently an excuse for exploitative treatment, that the film was judged no good whatsoever. But the aberrations of The Night of the Iguana were tolerated because they show a valid vision of man--an honest and sincere view. The fact that NCOMP, and the Catholics that review for it, could not accept what they termed the "romantic naturalism" of Tennessee Williams, does not mean they cannot accept his films as art. The A-IV ratings of this film and of Divorce - Italian Style, Marriage - Italian Style, and Freud show that NCOMP and Fr. Sullivan mean it when they say they are not trying to impose any kind of Catholic, or even Christian, orthodoxy on film themes.

Unlike the old Code, the reviewers show very little concern for protecting the symbols of authority--ecclesiastical or civil. Both 8 1/2 and Divorce - Italian Style ridicule the Church, but were not considered unacceptable. The Balcony was condemned not for criticising the establishment but for its atmosphere of the absurd, its complete cynicism with all things human, and its erotic elements. It was tasteless and erotic treatment that gave a B to The Loved One, not its mocking of religion and commercialism. It was the sex and suggestive dialogue of Oh Dad, Poor Dad, not its "campy" critique of momism and Victorianism, that made it objectionable in part.

The weakness of NCOMP moral classification, however, is its impossible task of somehow separating art from morality. This weakness is not so clearly seen in serious films, where artistic purposes are enmeshed in "visions of man" that inevitably have a strong moral element. It is seen in comic films, where the determining factor is that intangible and subjective tyrant--good taste. Thus Tom Jones, Irma La Douce, What's New Pussycat, High Infidelity, and Oh Dad, Poor Dad seem in diverse categories on the capricious grounds of good taste versus poor taste. Here NCOMP acted as an arbiter of artistic canons rather than as a moral guide. Among these films, only Tom Jones is in an acceptable category. Yet Tom spends at least as much time in bed as Irma, and what's more, he seems to derive greater enjoyment from it. Nothing in Irma La Douce can match the gaminess of the suggestion that Tom slept with his putative mother. But Tom Jones was a brilliantly executed film, technically and dramatically. This is the only difference between them: excellence, quality, "class." Oh Dad, Poor Dad also has stunning effects, but for NCOMP, as for the secular critics, it did not measure up to Tom Jones. It was also a "sick" film. Yet it was certainly no more "sick" than The Collector, which did not have the saving grace of being a farce.

Tom Jones was saved because it was "fast paced." But What's New Pussycat was frenetically paced, and even more zany. Yet, as the critics agreed, it was in poor taste. High Infidelity was the only comic film condemned. It is very sexy, but no more so than the B comic films. Unlike the B films, however, it is not fast and clever and witty but slow and whimsical, perhaps a bit leering. Pussycat, however, has at least an equal leer of its own.

Whether one agrees with these latter ratings or not, it is not on grounds of morality or "occasions of sin." The B rating of Casanova 70 stated this quite frankly: "Some genuinely amusing sequences and occasional human touches do not sufficiently compensate for the crudity of this one-joke sex farce."

From the ratings examined, it seems that most consultors use A-I, II, and III with the intended audience in mind: children, adolescents, or adults.

NCOMP is not preoccupied with violence. The violence of James Bond is not given the same attention as his sex life. War films, murder mysteries, and westerns where violence is rampant do not draw fire from NCOMP. Even the ghoulish sadism of horror films is passed over, as this exchange at a rating session bears witness. The film in question is The Frozen Dead:

> Fr. Sullivan: The consensus seems to be that the film is disgusting and repulsive, full of dismembered arms, legs, heads of deep-frozen Nazi's. A science-fiction thing about mad scientists literally resuscitating fascism. [Reads excerpts from reports:] "unhealthy and sensational" - "cheap and tawdry" - "disgusting"--that's what they all say.
>
> Consultor A: Well, I guess A-I or A-II, preferably A-I because children will laugh it off.
>
> Consultor B: I'm not so sure about the children, but I'll go along with [Consultor A].
>
> Consultor C: Nothing morally wrong. TV horror matches it.
>
> Fr. Sullivan: Well, A-I it is then, but we must make sure that the [Catholic Film] Newsletter will make it clear that the film is aesthetically repulsive and a poor film technically.[25]

The consultors' ratings of films suggest that they go through the following process in rating a film. First, they look to see if the treatment is sexually stimulating; then if the theme is dishonest or untrue to their understanding of life and the consequences of human actions. If the film is sexually stimulating, it will get a B rating. If in addition to being sexually stimulating, the theme expresses what they consider to be a sordid view of life, the film will be condemned. If there is no stimulating treatment, a sordid theme has a good chance of being accepted. Without the nudity, Le Bonheur almost certainly would not have been condemned despite its unacceptable theme. This latter interpretation is hard to test, since films which have so-called sordid themes invariably have sexy treatment.

An outstanding film of quality with a serious and honest theme will most likely receive an A-IV, whatever the treatment is like, barring complete nudity. Brilliant technique can also save a film that might otherwise be rated unacceptable, even if the theme is not serious. In comic films, despite treatment of a sexually stimulating nature, good taste may raise it to A-IV.

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[25] Transcript of rating session at NCOMP offices, August 1, 1967.

Sexy treatment, therefore, is the predominant criterion of consultors if one judges by the frequency with which it is employed. But the most important criterion, since it over-rides concern for sexy treatment, is artistic excellence which includes, in descending order of importance, honesty of theme and good taste. No theme will be considered honest if it does not at least make room somewhere for an underlying glimmer of hope and trust in the goodness of man. Placed in logical order of employment the consultors criteria would be:

1. Treatment of sexual activity with discreet restraint.
2. Honesty and integrity of theme.
3. Artistic excellence.
4. Good taste.
5. Underlying philosophy of hope and trust in the fundamental goodness of man.

By "logical order" is meant the sequence in which these criteria would be applied. If a film passes the first criterion, the second might not be raised at all. If it passes the first two criteria, there is no need to pursue the question further. It is only in dealing with a problem film of quality, where there is some doubt about the first four criteria, that the final criterion would be applied. All criteria are applied in films like Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Alfie, The Night of the Iguana, The Silence, and Phaedra. The Frozen Dead passed the first criterion and that was the end of analysis.

The order of importance of these criteria, in the sense of one overruling the other, would be different:

1. Honesty and integrity of theme.
2. Artistic excellence.
3. Treatment of sexual activity with discreet restraint.
4. Underlying philosophy of hope and trust in the fundamental goodness of man.
5. Good taste.

In farcical films that make no pretense of reflecting real life, criteria 1 and 4 are irrelevant, and criterion 5 may take precedence over criterion 3.

These criteria do not derive from the official documents studied in the previous chapter, on the basis of their content and the fact that so many consultors are not familiar with these documents.

The first two criteria, broad and general as they are, are basic to common sense and would be shared by the majority of educated Americans. As we have seen, all but two of the consultors are college graduates and many have graduate degrees. The third criterion derives quite clearly from Catholic doctrine on the occasion of sin and the nature of sex, which, according to the doctrine, may only be enjoyed by marriage partners. The overwhelming majority of consultors are products of Catholic schools. The fourth criterion, as broad and general as the first two, is a basic assumption of Christianity, Judaism, and humanism. Good taste is intangible and cannot be defined but only indicated in what pleases cultivated people in fashion, art, and music. As the sample films have shown, the taste of the critics is not far removed from the taste of the consultors.

This examination of consultors' actual judgments indicates that the only criterion they use that might be called Catholic is their attitude toward sexual treatment. Yet even here, the sensitivities of the different consultors varies, as the diversity of ratings for each film have shown. Further, this same attitude toward sex is not exclusively Catholic by any means.[26] Comstock was not a Catholic, and many of the supporters of the early Legion were not Catholic.

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[26] In 1966, 24 out of 33 films found unacceptable by the PCA were so judged because of their treatment of sex. (Annual Report /Los Angeles: Production Code Administration, 1966/ section V-B, No. 1.) (Mimeographed.) Cf. Alexander Walker, Celluloid Sacrifice: Aspects of Sex in the Movies (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1967), p. 19.

CHAPTER V

COMPARISON OF POLICY AND PRACTICE

When the Legion of Decency changed its name to the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures on December 8, 1965, the then Executive Secretary, Msgr. Thomas F. Little, published an article in America on the new policies adopted by his office since 1957. Little gave the major credit for this change to Pope Pius XII.

> Our "little aggiornamento" began in the mid-1950's. With the publication in 1955 of Pius XII's allocutions on the ideal film, the Legion began to open its windows. They were thrown wide open in 1957 with the appearance of Pope Pius' encyclical on the mass media, Miranda Prorsus ("Remarkable Inventions"). It was a plea to Catholics throughout the world to accept motion pictures as something good and useful for the cultural and spiritual progress of man, rather than simply as possible occasions of sin.
>
> From the time of its establishment in 1934, the Legion's primary attitude toward the motion picture medium had been largely one of defensiveness, of caution, of treating films as merely a form of escapist entertainment that must never shock or upset or confuse the average moviegoer. Many friendly voices were already advising the Legion that change was necessary. The teaching of Pius XII encouraged it to give these voices even fuller attention.
>
> . . . .
>
> The precise year for the beginning of this renewal was 1957; it is altogether proper to refer to a pre-1957 Legion of Decency and a post-1957 Legion, just as it is fitting now to refer to a pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Church.[1]

It is the purpose of this chapter to compare the policy of the post-1957 NCOMP, as examined in Chapter III, with its practice of film classification, as examined in Chapter IV.

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[1] Little, op. cit., p. 744.

It has already been established in Chapter III that Miranda Prorsus cannot bear the burden of "aggiornamento" that Msgr. Little has assigned to it. It is no more positive in its attitude to films than Vigilanti Cura was, and its stern moralistic tone has already been discussed. The positive notes of Vigilanti Cura, which do not fail to mention that films are capable of exercising a "profoundly moral influence" and of arousing "noble ideals," were just not heeded at the time.[2]

Censorship

From the point of view of NCOMP policy, 1957 is an important year because of the American bishops' statement on censorship. In this statement, as has been seen, the bishops did not quote the Pope, but the Supreme Court decision on the Roth case to the effect that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment. The bishops maintained that they were opposed to censorship as un-American, but that they favored advisory services to warn the public about "morally offensive" literature and films. They made the claim that the Legion of Decency's activities "cannot justly be termed an attempt to exercise censorship."

Has this claim been borne out by the practice of NCOMP in the last ten years? Msgr. Little claimed publicly that in 1964 and 1965 "34 films, of which 20 were major American productions, would have been released with scenes employing nudity had not the producers realized that they would have been condemned."[3] Thus, pressure from the Legion caused scenes to be cut from at least 34 films. Was this censorship?

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[2] Pope Pius XI, op. cit., p. 9.

Censorship has been variously described. The most common understanding of censorship is prior restraint of publication by the coercive powers of the state.[4] According to Chafee, this understanding is too narrow. He cites numerous cases declared unconstitutional when only subsequent punishment, not prior restraint, was involved.[5] Does NCOMP exercise censorship in either the sense of prior restraint or subsequent punishment? According to Fr. Sullivan, the answer is no.[6] No coercion is involved. Distributors are merely informed that a film will be condemned if certain scenes are not removed. If the distributor does not remove the scenes, the only result is the condemned rating, which has no legal force whatsoever. Condemnation is an advisory device used by NCOMP to warn Catholics that a film is morally offensive. Whether the Catholics attend the film or not is their private affair. Catholics have an obligation derived from their social responsibility (in NCOMP's view) to consult NCOMP ratings and to take them into account in making their decisions, but their decisions are their own. The decision of the distributors is also free. It is a marketing decision, not an artistic decision. If their goal is to reach a wide audience, and they feel that a condemned rating will reduce the size of their audience more than the inclusion of the questioned scene or scenes would increase the size of the intended audience, they will make the recommended cuts. These marketing decisions are at times offensive to the artistic sensibilities of the directors and producers of films, Fr. Sullivan admits, and if they are powerful enough, they will overrule the distributors. Judging from advertising campaigns, however, Fr. Sullivan feels that frequently the inclusion of allegedly offensive scenes is itself a marketing and not an artistic decision.

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[3] Little, op. cit., p. 746.

[4] Chafee, Jr., op. cit., p. 11.

[5] Ibid., p. 11, n.15.

[6] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

Distributors still make cuts to avoid condemnation. The Girl and the General was recently rated A-III after scenes had been deleted to avoid a C rating.[7] According to Vincent Canby, however, the fear of condemnation is not as strong as it used to be among major American distributors. When director Michelangelo Antonioni refused to cut Blow-Up to avoid condemnation, M-G-M, the distributors, released the film through a subsidiary, Premier Productions, so as not to lose the image of compliance with NCOMP.[8] Yet, Canby stated, Blow-Up was a "huge critical and box-office success" ($ 7 million gross[9]). Thus, later, when Otto Preminger refused to make changes in Hurry Sundown, Paramount released it in its own name. This condemned film, however, was not a financial success. Canby has judged nevertheless, that the condemnation of five major American productions in 1967 indicated that NCOMP had failed to persuade distributors to make cuts in films, among them Warner Brothers-Seven Arts' Reflections in a Golden Eye and Paramount's The Penthouse, both approved by the Production Code Administration under the new Code.[10]

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[7] Variety, Nov. 15, 1967, p. 17.

[8] The New York Times, Oct. 13, 1967, p. 35.

[9] Variety, loc. cit.

Whether or not this cooperation between film companies and NCOMP can be accurately described as censorship, it does go beyond the stated purpose of film classification as "advisory guidance" for Catholic film patrons. On the other hand, it must be admitted that industry compliance with NCOMP requests is voluntary, although motivated by economic self-interest.

Rating Criteria

The fact that NCOMP uses its ratings to persuade changes in individual scenes raises the question: What is it that NCOMP primarily objects to in alleged offensive films? The pre-1957 Legion position was stated strongly by Archbishop McNicholas in 1938, when he was Episcopal Chairman of the Committee for Motion Pictures:

> The Legion of Decency is concerned solely with the moral issue found in the subject matter of motion pictures and in its treatment. . . . Films which portray, approvingly, concepts rooted in philosophies attaching the Christian moral order and the supernatural distiny of man serve not to ennoble, but rather, to debase humanity and, as such, these films are an affront to right thinking men and women. . . . The Legion of Decency, with every resource at its command, shall challenge any program using the popular theatre screen to exploit such insidious doctrines.[11]

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[10] The New York Times, loc. cit.

[11] Report, 1938, pp. 80-81.

Although McNicholas mentioned treatment, the emphasis of his statement was on objectionable themes--approval of anti-Christian philosophies and "insidious doctrines." This concern is consonant with the original Production Code, whose General Principles are directed at film themes lest evil seem to be approved. It is also in keeping with Richard Dana Skinner's emphasis in his "The Morals of the Screen." Yet Facey found the practice of the Legion to be overwhelmingly concerned with treatment, not theme, and especially with the treatment of sex.

Facey catalogued the objections to the 157 films rated B from November, 1939 to November, 1943. Of 253 separate objections lodged against these films, only 31 were based on theme. Of these 31 objections, 16 were concerned with marriage and divorce. The vast majority of objections--217--regarded treatment. Of these objections, 173 involved sex.[12]

Conversely, in 1940 when The Grapes of Wrath was released, the Legion rated it A-II. Yet the Legion publicly stated that the film "does not disclose a general adherence to Christian principles of justice and charity in the social order, or to the supernatural concept of man's existence, responsibilities, relationships, or destiny."[13] Privately, the Legion also felt that the film was an attack on capitalism, employers, and law officers as a class.[14] The Grapes of Wrath did not have any objectionable sexual treatment and thus did not present an "occasion of sin."

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[12] Facey, op. cit., p. 98.

[13] Report, 1940, p. 107.

[14] Ibid.

Is the post-1957 NCOMP notably different in regard to its policy on objectionable material? This is difficult to answer. Msgr. Little summed up the NCOMP attitude this way:

> [It is not true] that we will approve films that preach a philosophy of life opposed to the Judeo-Christian view of man. The key word here is preach. There is a world of difference between a film that holds up to view a situation that is obviously reprehensible morally and a film that says such a situation is desirable and worthy of emulation. Moviegoers must learn to tell the difference.
>
> Here it must be strongly emphasized that we have no intention of ignoring the moral dimension of films in favor of the artistic. In the work of classifying movies, the Legion will continue to speak out against morally harmful trends in film production and against singular instances of films that are threats to private or public morality.[15]

Here, Little spoke about both theme and treatment, preachments against Judeo-Christian philosophy and "threats" to morality. But the statement on theme was mild. NCOMP will "not approve" of anti-Christian themes. It will be stronger against films that are morally harmful. Little's example of the morally harmful is nudity. Thus, such treatment in films receives the sterner censure.[16]

On the other hand, Pius XII's The Ideal Film, Fr. Sullivan's personal viewpoint,[17] the predominant view of the NCOMP reviewers[18] and

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[15] Little, op. cit., p. 745.

[16] Ibid., p. 746.

[17] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[18] Cf. Questionnaire findings, Chapter IV.

Msgr. Little himself on another occasion,[19] consider that theme deserves the greater attention and more careful scrutiny. For the Pope, the problem with theme was that it might advocate a view of life that contradicts Catholic teaching and thus in his view be untrue to life. For Fr. Sullivan, Msgr. Little, and the NCOMP reviewers, the immorality of theme is not a question of religious doctrine at all. It is a question of "honesty and integrity of theme." That is, a film that has an insincere point of view, that does not reflect life as it is, is fundamentally immoral, if it is a serious film. Msgr. Little used the example of Never On Sunday, which, in his view, "asks us to believe that a woman of easy virtue /a prostitute/ finds true joy and human fulfillment in her work." For Little, "such a film is lying to its audience."[20] For Fr. Sullivan, the hard-core cynicism and despair of films like The Balcony and The Loved One exclude the possibility of integrity of theme, just as the false glamour and superficiality of Doris Day films like Pillow Talk and Lover Come Back are fundamentally dishonest.[21]

The record since 1957 (Cf. Tables XVI and XVII) shows that two out of three objections for B films arose from the treatment, not the theme. The identical ratio holds for reasons given for condemnation of C films. (See Tables XVIII and XIX.) Among B films, two out of three objections

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[19] Transcript of interview with Msgr. Thomas F. Little on CBS Reports for May 11, 1961 at 10:00 P.M., p. 6. (Mimeographed.)

[20] Ibid.

[21] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

TABLE XVI

PUBLISHED REASONS FOR OBJECTIONS TO B FILMS: OCTOBER 1956-OCTOBER 1966

(Years run from October to October)[a]

Years	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	Total
Number of B films:	137	74	43	64	71	46	37	45	43	34	594
Reasons for objection:											1212
Treatment:											
Details method of crime		2	2		2	1					7
Excessive brutality	17	17	13	15	12	9	4	7	7	3	104
Sordid atmosphere				1	1	1	4	10	7	4	28
Not suitable for mass audience	2	1	3	1	2	3	2		1	1	16
Suggestive		1	2	4	2	7	4	10	11	12	53
- in costumes	58	28	19	28	37	21	14	20	19	13	257
- in dialogue	32	13	6	11	13	12	8	11	7	5	118
- in situations	83	35	19	36	39	24	17	20	15	13	301
Theme:											
Amoral philosophy				5		3	5		1	2	16
Brutality justified	1						1				2
Condoning of evil	12	8	3	9	11	5	7	2	1	1	69
Deceit justified	1										1

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Years	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	Total
Disrespect for authority	4	1								1	6
Disrespect for religion				1	3	1	2	3	2	2	14
Divorce justified	9	5	4	1	2						21
Illicit sex justified	6	1	1	4	3	4	9	6	8	4	46
Low moral tone	20	17	5	7	16	11	3	3	6	2	90
Marriage ridiculed	15	2		2		1					20
Racial prejudice condoned					1						1
Reincarnation presented	3	1									4
Remarriage after divorce justified	2	1	4	1	1						9
Revenge justified	2						1				3
Suicide justified	1	1			2			1	1	1	7
Superstition defended		3									3
Undue sympathy for criminals shown	5	1	2	5	3						16

[a] Source: Film Catalog 1936-1965 (New York: NCOMP, 1966), passim; Films, 1966 (New York: NCOMP, 1967), passim.

TABLE XVII

CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST - PUBLISHED REASONS FOR OBJECTIONS TO B FILMS: OCTOBER 1956-OCTOBER 1966[a]

Categories	Percentage of total objections
Treatment in general	66%
Theme in general	34%
Treatment of sex	59%
Theme involving sex	7%
Sex in general	66%
Treatment of brutality	9%
Theme involving brutality	.11%
Brutality in general	9.11%
Religion in general	1%

[a] Source: Film Catalog 1936-1965 (New York: NCOMP, 1966), *passim*; Films, 1966 (New York: NCOMP, 1967), *passim*.

were concerned with sex, and of these objections 89 per cent were with regard to treatment. Among C films half of all objections were concerned with sex and 84 per cent of these objections were with regard to treatment, including 3 per cent concerned with nudity.

These figures show that the post-1957 NCOMP is still largely concerned with the "occasions of sin" that sexy scenes may offer. On the other hand, the fact that the percentage of objections concerned with sex is less among C films than it is among B films, indicates that sex may be the most frequent cause for an unfavorable rating, but not

TABLE XVIII

PUBLISHED REASONS FOR CONDEMNATIONS OF C FILMS: OCTOBER 1956-OCTOBER 1966

(Years run from October to October)[a]

Years	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	Total
Number of C films:	11	5	7	8	10	15	11	16	15	12	110
Reasons for condemnation											295
Treatment:											
Brutality and sadism	5	1							1	1	8
Grossly suggestive						3	3	3	6	7	22
- in costumes	6	4	4	2	5	2	7	3	1		34
- in dialogue	6	3	1	1	4	1	6	3			25
- in situations	6	5	3	3	5	2	7	4	1		36
Nudity							1	4	2	3	10
Offensive to Judaeo-Christian morality	9	3	4	2	5	6	1	2	2		34
Pornographic, obscene, prurient						2	2	4	3	4	15
Sordid atmosphere	1		1		1	4		1	3	1	12

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

Years	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	Total
Theme:											
Artificial insemination justified			1								
Condoning of evil			1	1	1	1	1		1		6
Grossly immoral	4		2	1	6	7	2	4	3	3	32
Illicit sex justified	4	1	1		1	2	1	1	2	1	14
Low moral tone		1		1	1			1		1	5
Marriage ridiculed	4					2			1	1	8
Not suitable for mass audiences*	3			2	5	3		1	1	1	16
Perversion presented			1	2	1	3		3		1	11
Religion ridiculed						3	1		1		5
Suicide justified					1						1

[a] Source: Film Catalog 1936-1965 (New York: NCOMP, 1966), passim; Films, 1966 (New York: NCOMP, 1967), passim.

*This category is applied to treatment in B films.

TABLE XIX

CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST - PUBLISHED REASONS FOR CONDEMNATIONS OF C FILMS: OCTOBER 1956-OCTOBER 1966[a]

Categories	Percentage of total reasons
Treatment in general	66%
Theme in general	34%
Treatment of sex	50%
Theme involving sex	8%
Pornography	5%
Nudity	3%
Brutality and sadism in general	2.7%
Religion in general	1%

[a] Source: Film Catalog 1936-1965 (New York: NCOMP, 1966), *passim*; Films, 1966 (New York: NCOMP, 1967), *passim*.

necessarily the most serious. Nevertheless, from the point of view of frequency, treatment accounts for twice the number of unfavorable ratings that theme does.

The NCOMP practice is not inconsistent with its stated policy on its criteria for classification. NCOMP has stated that it is concerned about occasions of sin, "threats to private morality." NCOMP has also stated that anti-Christian themes in films are dangerous. Fr. Sullivan has gone on record as stating that anti-Christian does not mean anti-Roman Catholic Church, but rather a philosophy that condones wrongdoing and/or sees no fundamental goodness in man.[22] 8 1/2, which satirizes elements of the Catholic Church, was given a favorable rating. The Night of the Iguana, which NCOMP considered atheistic but honest, also received a favorable rating. Since 1957 only 1 per cent of all B and C films were so rated because of disrespect or ridicule of religion--of any religion. (See Tables XVII and XIX.) Consistent with itself, this policy is not consistent with the rigorous Catholic bias of Miranda Prorsus.

Msgr. Little mentioned that NCOMP would not abandon the moral dimension of films for the artistic.[23] This statement raises the fundamental difficulty of the NCOMP ratings: the interaction of the artistic and the moral in determining a film's alleged moral acceptability.

The pre-1957 Legion stated unequivocally that it was concerned only with the "moral issue" raised by films. Since 1957, Bishop McNulty, Msgr. Little, and Fr. Sullivan have all expanded the moral to include the artistic.[24] They did this by using "honesty and integrity of theme" as a criterion for rating films. The ratings of such films as La Dolce Vita, Tom Jones, What's New Pussycat were based on aesthetic criteria, involving "good taste," cinematic techniques, acting ability, and script continuity. The individual ballots of NCOMP reviewers on the sample films also reveal a preoccupation with the artistic attainment as well as the moral statement of directors, writers, and producers. There is nothing inconsistent about NCOMP using these double sets of criteria, since policy statements admit that they are used. However, there is a problem of confusing users of NCOMP ratings because aesthetic criteria are not uniformly applied in all the classifications.

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[22] Interview with Fr. Sullivan, May 5, 1967.

[23] Little, op. cit., p. 745.

[24] Cf. Chapter III, Policy and the Pledge.

A-I, A-II, and A-III films are judged on sheerly negative grounds. They receive acceptable ratings because there is nothing morally offensive among them. These ratings by no means imply that the films are worth seeing because of artistic excellence. Ironically, A-IV films are so rated because they are judged to attain a measure of artistic achievement which outweighs any morally offensive elements which may be present. The suggestive scenes of Lord Love A Duck, Tom Jones, Divorce - Italian Style, and other A-IV films are permitted on the grounds of aesthetic necessity. In effect, an A-IV rating is a recommendation of a film well worth seeing in NCOMP's judgment. No such accolade is intended by the A-I rating of The Frozen Dead or the A-II rating of Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter.[25]

The critical factor of artistic excellence in placing a film in the A-IV category casts doubt on the moral validity of the B and C categories. If Phaedra and The Silence are condemned while The Collector and Darling are considered A-IV, then it seems that the condemned films are such by a failure of artistic achievement that would justify the inclusion of otherwise objectionable material. In the published rating of Phaedra, the suggestive sequences are called "totally unnecessary." One individual ballot for a C rating of The Silence stated that there was no "*justification* for the strongly stimulating use of sex" which did not seem counterbalanced or justified by a comprehensible message. (Italics added.) The published condemned rating stated that despite Ingmar Bergman's good intentions, he had seriously violated "*artistic taste* and *sensitivity*." (Italics added.)

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[25] All published ratings are listed alphabetically in Film Catalog, 1936-1665 (New York: National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, 1966) and in Films 1966 (New York: National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, 1967). Quotations of ratings are taken from these sources unless otherwise noted.

B ratings contain similar judgments. Four For Texas is called a "contrived melodramatic comedy," In Harm's Way is a "shallow melodrama," The Loved One is a "heavy-handed satire."

This concern for the aesthetic mixed with the moral in A-IV, B, and C films and the relative suppression of aesthetic considerations in the rating of A-I, A-II, and A-III films vitiates the accomplishment of NCOMP's stated objective to provide an advisory guidance service for parents in selecting films for their children. Parents can be sure that there will be no offensive sex treatment in films allowed for children by NCOMP. But there is no guarantee that A-I and A-II films will not be banal, inane, violent or lacking in "honesty and integrity of theme." NCOMP has tried to correct this defect by having the National Center for Film Study, its educational affiliate, collaborate in the publication of reviews of worthwhile films in the Catholic Film Newsletter (Cf. Appendix B) and by publishing capsule reviews along with its ratings, called A Guide to Current Films.[26] However, the Catholic Film Newsletter is a monthly publication with a limited circulation and the Guide is intended to be published only seven times a year. Moreover, the Catholic population learns about NCOMP evaluations through Diocesan Catholic newspapers, which regularly publish only the ratings which NCOMP issues every two weeks.

Question 13 of the questionnaire revealed that many (42) of the 84 NCOMP reviewers had misgivings about the NCOMP classification system. (See Table XIV.) Five of the reviewers felt that NCOMP needed a "harmless trash" category to avoid the appearance of recommending low-quality films in the A-I, A-II, and A-III categories. Two other reviewers saw the need for a "For children only" category. As it is, the NCOMP classification system has no way of indicating the artistic quality of non-objectionable films. This inadequacy offsets the recent NCOMP efforts by means of awards and accolades to encourage artistic excellence and gives the impression that the classifications encourage the bland and the childish.

As has been seen in the examination of policy statements, NCOMP has not taken a stand for positions that are exclusively Catholic. It has espoused the general morality of the Production Code. It has opposed what state and civic censorship boards had opposed in the early years of film production and which led to Hays' list of "Don'ts and Be Carefuls," later incorporated in the Code. From October, 1956 to October, 1966, 1,212 objections have been lodged against 594 B films. (See Table XVI.) Only a very few of these objections could be considered as arising chiefly from the Catholicism of NCOMP: 21 objections to themes that justified divorce, 9 objections to themes that justified remarriage after divorce, and 7 objections to themes that justified suicide. Objections to divorce and remarriage, and to suicide, of course, are not exclusively Catholic. From October, 1956 to October, 1966, 295 reasons have been published for the condemnation of 110 C films. (See Table XVIII.) Among these reasons only one was concerned with the justification of suicide. One reason alone for condemnation could be said to be an exclusively Catholic one. On January 20, 1959, the Legion condemned Question of Adultery, a British film which portrayed sympathetically the practice of artificial insemination of a woman by an anonymous doner. The published condemnation explicitly refers to Pope Pius XII's teaching that "artificial insemination violates the natural law and is illicit and immoral."[27]

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[26] This service began on March 9, 1967 and is not concurrent with the 1957-1966 period this study has examined.

Four B films were objectionable because they presented the doctrine of reincarnation, that human beings have lived previous lives in other times and places of which they have no memory. Three B films were cited because they were thought to encourage superstition, to wit, belief in vampires and werewolves. These objections were made in 1957 and 1958. Since Americans, even in 1958, were not generally adherents of any of these beliefs and the likelihood of their being converted to them seemed and seems small, it is hard to say why the Legion took exception to these films. In any event, these beliefs, or myths, are not exclusively opposed to Catholicism.

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[27] Report, 1959, p. 14.

From the record of objectionable films and condemned films and from the policy statements of NCOMP since 1957, it cannot be said that either NCOMP policy or practice is distinctively Catholic. NCOMP is rather an agent of general Christian principles on sexual morality, primarily, and a proponent of traditional respect for the law and institutions of American society. This "consensus" posture is in keeping with the inter-faith origins of the Legion of Decency campaign which resulted in the establishment of the permanent office now known as NCOMP.

Thus the practice of film classification is not inconsistent with NCOMP policy. Both policy and practice, however, are involved in a fundamental ambiguity: aesthetic criteria are inextricably mixed in with moral criteria in the minds of the spokesmen of NCOMP as well as in the minds of its reviewers. These criteria are applied in a non-uniform manner to different films, which obscures the distinction between A-IV, B, and C categories. On the other hand, the failure to apply any aesthetic norms to A-I, A-II, or A-III categories makes them inadequate guides for the parents in whom NCOMP professes great interest and whom it wishes to serve.

Morality and Art

Since 1957, the growing preoccupation of NCOMP with "honesty and integrity of theme" and the film makers' "vision of man" has made the application of film classification more difficult. If the trend grows, perhaps NCOMP will drop classification altogether for reviews. It is hard to articulate the antipathy between the mentality that can classify films according to categories and the mentality that is concerned with the total effect of the experience of a film, its vision and its honesty. To this researcher, at least, it appears that the antipathy arises out of a piecemeal attention to individual scenes and what they physically show the viewer, on the one hand, and an absorption in the totality of experience that a film affords, a totality that infuses each individual scene with a point of view and meaning on the other hand. For John Howard Lawson, the scriptwriter of Blockade, a film is not a manufactured thing, made up of so many building blocks:

> Film form may be defined as an audio-visual pattern. But the energizing purpose is a vision of man. The film-maker begins his work with a preconceived idea of man, derived from his own life, thought, and observation. The creative process is a further life-experience, reshaping and developing the idea with which it began. The making of a film, starting with the script and continuing to the final cutting, is a struggle with emotional, aesthetic, rational, and structural problems.[28]

Like a painting or a novel, a film is an expression of the mind of an artist. It can no more be categorized than the artist, or any individual human being, can be placed securely in a pidgeonhole.

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[28] John Howard Lawson, Film: The Creative Process (2nd ed.; New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 269.

Judging the theme of a film from the viewpoint of honesty is both an aesthetic and moral problem. It does not matter so much if the judge's own view of life agrees with that expressed by the film (or book, or man) so long as the film rings true as an expression of genuine experience. For C.S. Lewis, the test of art is that it show us how life looks from a pair of eyes other than our own. Lewis recalled that he read Dante's Divine Comedy when he was an atheist and Lucretius' materialistic On The Nature of Things when he was a convinced Christian. Neither book offended him because he happened to see life differently than the author he was reading at the time. But he profited from both because they showed him what it was like to be a Christian and what it was like to be an atheist.[29] The kind of judgment NCOMP rendered on The Night of the Iguana is the kind of judgment Lewis commends. No category, however, can be used to express this kind of judgment; it requires the extended comment that NCOMP gave with its judgment of this film and of Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

If NCOMP is to pursue this type of evaluation, it will have to give less attention to treatment and more to theme than it has in the past. If it does, it will not only improve, in this researcher's view, its service of advisory guidance, but it will be more in keeping with modern moral theology. Fr. Piet Schoonenberg, a Dutch Jesuit theologian, sees sin not so much as an individual act as a total attitude toward life which happens to be expressed in certain acts.[30] The classification approach to films is tied up with individual scenes, acts, and tends to ignore the thematic context in which they take place. Each scene is viewed as a self-contained capsule that might present an occasion of sin or offend the sensibilities of the audience. In fairness to NCOMP, it must be admitted that some films are constructed in a piecemeal fashion that works sensational scenes into an excuse for a plot. Each scene is viewed as a self-contained capsule that, in this case, provides advertising potential. Such films invite the classification approach, with its emphasis on treatment. Since two out of every three unfavorable ratings issued by NCOMP are based on treatment rather than theme, it is evident that NCOMP has yielded to the temptation to judge most films this way.

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[29] C. S. Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 86.

If, however, NCOMP were to concentrate on film themes in its ratings with the vigor its policy statements have suggested, this lopsided emphasis on treatment would have to stop. Such a change, in this researcher's opinion, would not be a loss. NCOMP's service to parents and others who chose to use it would be enhanced by increased attention to thematic, and therefore artistic, content. In the case of an exploitation film that uses sex and violence for no purpose other than sensationalism, NCOMP could base its judgment not so much on the presence of sensationalism as on the absence of artistic substance and thematic value. This practice, of course, would make ratings by specific categories most difficult since it cannot rely on the relatively simple rules of how much skin is shown or blood is spilt. Thematic judgments require the same attention to the artistic wholeness of a finished film as NCOMP has urged producers and directors to give to film-making. Such judgments cannot realistically be summarized by a code letter or number. They require reasoned reviews.

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[30] Piet Schoonenberg, S.J., Man and Sin: A Theological View (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), pp. 197-98.

A Guide To Current Films for November 16, 1967 provided an example of the kind of review that might profitably replace, rather than merely supplement, the classification system:

> THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL. This American release of a 1962 film by Luis Bunuel will surprise no one familiar with the pessimistic and anti-Church themes of his other works. Once again he states what he once said was the purpose of all his films: "to show that we do not live in the best of all possible worlds." In Angel, a number of wealthy party guests find that after a long night in the home of their host, they are unable to leave, held by some mysterious force. In the days that follow, their veneer of politesse disintegrates until raw personality shows through. When finally the victims are released from each other's presence, they gather in a church to celebrate their deliverance; discover themselves unable to leave the church. Escape from one trap only leads to a larger, more comprehensive one. Much more effectively than No Exit, The Exterminating Angel says, "Hell is other people." (Altura Films) (B & W) (A-III)
>
> THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS. Polish director Roman Polanski tries his hand, surprisingly, at what may have been intended as a spoof of all the old vampire-horror movies, with very little success. An old vampire scholar (Jack McGowran) and his young assistant (Polanski) seek out a vampire's castle in the hills of Transylvania, using the tools of garlic, the cross and a wooden stake for their research. The vampires are released to spread their horrid practices throughout the western world. Imitation camp at best, it's all very short on humor, long on blood-drinking and double entendre. (MGM) (A-III)[31]

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[31] A Guide to Current Films (New York: NCOMP, November 16, 1967).

Now that the PCA uses a minimal classification system by labeling some films as "Suggested for Mature Audiences," does Fr. Sullivan see the possibility of NCOMP dropping its own classification in favor of reviews? His answer has thus far been negative:

> The recent proliferation of subsidiary companies which don't submit their pictures for Code Seals, and the fact that SMA /Suggested for Mature Audiences/ presently has no meaning at the box office and in advertising, makes me believe that it has been no solution, that its meaning has not been communicated to the public.[32]

Fr. Sullivan has stated that there must be something "that would bar films to children under a certain age, unless their parents want to go along with them."[33] He has favored the British classification system.[34]

If, however, NCOMP should ever abandon its system and begin publishing capsule reviews instead, how useful or necessary would they be? Even if one accepts the view that film critics do not generally bring moral criteria tobear on their critical reviews in the general press, there nevertheless remain a number of Catholic film critics writing for Catholic newspapers and magazines. The National Catholic Reporter, The Sunday Visitor, America, The Sign, Ave Maria, to cite just a few Catholic publications, all have film reviews by their own critics as well as publication of NCOMP classifications. The only justification for the publication of NCOMP reviews would have to be their superiority to other reviews in both knowledgeability and film expertise as well as in moral guidance. For this reason, the heretofore secondary role of NCOMP's educational affiliate, The National Center for Film Study in Chicago, will probably, in this writer's opinion, assume greater importance and may come to overshadow the main office in New York. (Cf. Appendix B.)

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[32] Variety, November 15, 1967, p. 17.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Cf. Chapter IV, Film Classification.

Conclusion

This study has been an attempt to examine the purpose and extent of NCOMP policy and practice since 1957. It has shown that NCOMP, while it may be considered by some as Puritanical in its attitude toward sex, has no specifically Catholic doctrinal axe to grind. The study also has shown a shift in policy and practice emphasis, by no means complete, from exclusively moralistic preoccupations to a concern for artistic integrity. Whether this interest in the artistic level is legitimate for an agency billed as the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures is for other research to determine. Proof that the office is competent to pursue this interest rests with the knowledge and experience of its staff, evidence of which has been presented in the course of this study.

This dissertation has addressed itself to four narrow questions: What is NCOMP? What is the policy of NCOMP? How does NCOMP classify films? Is the policy of NCOMP consistent with its actual norms and methods of film classification? Yet these narrow questions are germane to broader questions that call for further research: How do films affect their audience with regard to attitude change? Is attitude change trivial or significant? Is attitude change measurable in the areas of ethics and morality? Is there a fundamental moral consensus among major film directors about the nature of man and the value of human life? Do films merely reflect the values of the community in which they are produced and consumed or do they mirror deviant values proper to the subgroup which produces films?

Communications media, of which the film is an acknowledged and powerful member, are the nervous system of the body politic. The more that is understood not only of the process of transmission, but also of the content and attitudes transmitted by the communications media, the more will society itself be understood.[35] Heretofore, the dominant methods of communications research have been based on those of the physical sciences and thus the process of communications, viewed as a series of cause-and-effect relationships, has received the lion's share of research attention.[36] Human communications, however, are human, and the humanist disciplines of history and philosophy and psychiatry deserve a rightful place among the research tools used to understand the importance of what is being communicated and the manner in which it is interpreted.[37]

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[35] George Gerbner, "Mass Media and Human Communication Theory," Human Communication Theory: Original Essays, ed. Frank E. X. Dance (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1967), pp. 53ff.

[36] Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1960), pp. 8, 12ff.

Further research on the interaction of film and society must employ quantitative methods of analysis, such as content analysis. But the findings of this analysis must be assessed qualitatively. Film is an art to be appreciated and criticized, primarily, and only secondarily a mass-produced product that can be categorized and counted.

This dissertation has been a study of a special class of consumers of the film product in one sense, but the substance of the work has been its assessment of the norms and criteria of a special class of critics of an art form that is a major medium of mass communications. The norms and criteria of that special class of artists, film directors and screenwriters, offer an inviting and promising area of research for those interested in the attitudes and content of a medium of communication that influences society.

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[37] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, "The Search for a Social Theory of Communication in American Sociology," Human Communication Theory: Original Essays, ed. Frank E. X. Dance (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1967), pp. 236ff.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TOTAL NUMBER OF FILMS CLASSIFIED BY NCOMP

TABLE XX

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS ON FEATURE PICTURES REVIEWED AND CLASSIFIED[a]

CLASS A-I			CLASS A-II		CLASS A-III		CLASS A-IV		CLASS B		CLASS C		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
*	780	61	380	30					89	8	13	1	1,271
1938	332	62	164	31					32	6	5	1	535
1939	312	54	200	35					50	9	9	1.67	573
1940	271	50	210	39					47	9	10	2	539
1941	267	51.25	197	37.81					50	9.6	7	1.34	521
1942	271	51.13	202	38.11					51	9.62	5	.95	530
1943	229	52.16	151	34.40					55	12.53	4	.91	439
1944	191	44.52	184	42.89					51	11.89	3	.70	429
1945	143	38.1	189	50.4					43	11.5	0	0	375
1946	155	39.64	176	45.01					60	15.35	0	0	391
1947	195	44.32	172	39.09					70	15.91	3	.68	440
1948	174	38.58	188	41.69					82	18.18	7	1.55	451
1949	193	41.33	165	35.33					96	20.56	13	2.78	467
1950	179	39	169	36.82					103	22.44	8	1.74	459
**1951	148	33.49	195	44.12					85	19.23	14	3.16	442

TABLE XX (Continued)

	CLASS A-I		CLASS A-II		CLASS A-III		CLASS A-IV		CLASS B		CLASS C		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
***1952	182	40.81	172	38.56					78	17.49	14	3.14	446
1953	148	38.6	142	37.1					89	23.2	4	1.1	383
1954	138	39.20	127	36.08					78	22.16	9	2.56	352
1955	94	28.74	115	35.17					110	33.64	8	2.45	327
1956	98	29.88	141	42.99					80	24.39	8	2.44	328
1957	139	33.25	131	31.34					137	32.78	11	2.63	418
1958	132	33.42	109	27.59	73	18.48	2	.51	74	18.73	5	1.27	395
1959	70	25	91	32.5	68	24.2	1	.4	43	15.4	7	2.5	280
1960	80	29.09	55	20.	67	24.37	1	.36	64	23.27	8	2.91	275
1961	88	30.45	65	22.49	49	16.95	6	2.08	71	24.57	10	3.46	289
1962	73	26.55	80	29.09	51	18.54	10	3.64	46	16.73	15	5.45	275
****1963	70	26.62	71	27.	63	23.95	11	4.18	37	14.07	11	4.18	263
1964	52	20.15	71	27.52	60	23.26	14	5.43	45	17.44	16	6.20	258
1965	74	25.96	74	25.96	67	23.52	12	4.21	43	15.09	15	5.26	285
1966	68	25.96	64	24.43	76	29.	8	3.05	34	12.98	12	4.58	262

[a] Source: Annual Report, NCOMP, 1967 (New York: NCOMP, 1967), n.p.

*The comparative statistics of the Office for Motion Pictures date from February, 1936. First period covers films reviewed from February, 1936 to November, 1937. From 1938 through 1950 periods are based on films reviewed from November to November.

**This period covers films reviewed from November, 1950 to October, 1951.

***As of 1952 periods run from October to October.

****The Office for Motion Pictures announced on June 11, 1963 that henceforth the "Separate Classification" would be known as "A-IV"--Morally Unobjectionable for Adults, with Reservations. Only the title not the meaning of the "Separate Classification" has been changed.

TABLE XXI

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS ON DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN FEATURE PICTURES[a]

	CLASS A-I		CLASS A-II		CLASS B		CLASS C		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
					Domestic				
1948	162	44.14	152	41.42	52	14.17	1	.27	367
1949	177	45.62	139	35.82	69	17.78	3	.78	388
1950	171	42.54	150	37.31	79	19.65	2	.50	402
1951	136	37.26	162	44.38	66	18.08	1	.27	365
1952	164	44.33	141	38.11	64	17.29	1	.27	370
					Foreign				
1948	12	14.29	36	42.86	30	35.71	6	7.14	84
1949	16	20.25	26	32.91	27	34.18	10	12.66	79
1950	8	14.03	19	33.33	24	42.11	6	10.53	57
1951	12	15.58	33	42.86	19	24.68	13	16.88	77
1952	18	23.68	31	40.79	14	18.42	13	17.11	76

TABLE XXI (Continued)

	CLASS A-I		CLASS A-II		CLASS A-III		CLASS B		CLASS C		S.C.		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
						Domestic							
1953	140	41.67	124	36.90			71	21.13	1	.30			336
1954	120	43.01	101	36.13			56	20.07	2	.72			279
1955	82	29.82	97	35.27			92	33.45	4	1.45			275
1956	88	32.71	117	43.50			62	23.05	1	.37			269
1957	111	33.13	114	34.03			109	32.54	1	.30			335
1958	23	33.82	23	33.82	0	0	22	32.36	0	0	0	0	68
1958	97	34.64	79	28.22	65	23.21	39	13.93	0	0	0	0	280
						Foreign							
1953	8	17.02	18	38.30			18	38.30	3	6.38			47
1954	18	24.66	26	35.62			22	30.14	7	9.59			73
1955	12	23.08	18	34.62			18	34.62	4	7.69			52
1956	10	16.95	24	40.68			18	30.51	7	11.86			59
1957	28	33.74	17	20.48			28	33.74	10	12.05			83
1958	3	75.	0	0	0	0	1	25.	0	0	0	0	4
1958	9	20.93	7	16.28	8	18.60	12	27.91	5	11.63	2	4.65	43

TABLE XXI (Continued)

	CLASS A-I		CLASS A-II		CLASS A-III		CLASS B		CLASS C		S.C.		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Domestic													
1958	23	33.82	23	33.82	0	0	22	32.36	0	0	0	0	68
1958	97	34.64	79	28.22	65	23.21	39	13.93	0	0	0	0	280
1959	63	27.04	82	35.19	53	22.75	34	14.59	0	0	1	.43	233
1960	66	29.73	47	21.17	51	22.97	54	24.33	3	1.35	1	.45	222
1961	80	32.26	60	24.19	36	14.52	65	26.21	2	.81	5	2.01	248
1962	47	26.71	64	36.36	33	18.75	27	15.34	0	0	5	2.84	176
Foreign													
1958	3	75.	0	0	0	0	1	25.	0	0	0	0	4
1958	9	20.93	7	16.28	8	18.60	12	27.91	5	11.63	2	4.65	43
1959	7	14.89	9	19.15	15	31.92	9	19.15	7	14.89	0	0	47
1960	14	26.41	8	15.09	16	30.19	10	18.87	5	9.43	0	0	53
1961	8	19.51	5	12.20	13	31.71	6	14.63	8	19.51	1	2.44	41
1962	16	25.40	7	11.11	13	20.63	12	19.05	12	19.05	3	4.76	63

TABLE XXI (Continued)

	CLASS A-I		CLASS A-II		CLASS A-III		CLASS A-IV		CLASS B		CLASS C		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Domestic													
1963	61	32.27	55	29.10	39	20.63	5	2.65	27	14.29	2	1.06	189
1964	44	22.56	57	29.23	47	24.10	7	3.59	37	18.98	3	1.54	195
1965	67	30.73	63	28.90	47	21.56	3	1.38	35	16.05	3	1.38	218
Foreign													
1963	9	12.16	16	21.62	24	32.43	6	8.11	10	13.52	9	12.16	74
1964	8	12.70	14	22.22	13	20.64	7	11.11	8	12.70	13	20.64	63
1965	7	10.45	11	16.42	20	29.85	9	13.43	8	11.94	12	17.91	67

[a] Source: Annual Report, NCOMP, 1966 (New York: NCOMP, 1966), n.p.

APPENDIX B

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR FILM STUDY

In August of 1964 The National Center for Film Study became affiliated with NCOMP as its educational division. The Center had been in existence for two years as part of the Catholic Adult Education Center in Chicago, which is under the auspices of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, but financially self-supporting. Since its affiliation with NCOMP, more than 85 per cent of its budget has been paid for by NCOMP. The remaining funds are provided by fees and subscriptions for the services and publications of the Film Center. Although the Catholic Adult Education Center makes no financial contribution to the Film Center, it provides free space: an office for the director, a screening room for film previews and seminars, a conference room, and a library for books and periodicals pertinent to film study.

Only the director of The National Center for Film Study is on salary. The current director, Henry Herx, holds a master's degree in history from Loyola University in Chicago and teaches a film seminar at DePaul University, also in Chicago. Herx is assisted by volunteers who aid in the Center's programs. Notable volunteers are Ruth Parrington, head of the Visual Material Center of the Chicago Public Library, and Fr. Paul Carrico, director of the Screen Educators Society, a group formed in January 1967 and now engaged in devising film courses with a grant from the American Film Institute.

The Film Center serves as a clearing house for information on film education and film appreciation, and supplies study guides to films and lecturers to schools and colleges interested in film courses. The Center initiated film courses in two Chicago high schools, St. Benedict's and Notre Dame, and in one elementary school, St. Norbert's. The Center also has aided local colleges, among them Barat College and St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, in organizing film seminars. More than one hundred lectures on the film have been arranged by the Film Center. In its first year of operation with NCOMP, the Center handled more than 700 requests for information and assistance in film education. In 1966, these same requests had increased to 2,235.

The Center has published 217 study guides for individual feature films and 70 study guides for short documentaries. In direct connection with NCOMP, the Center has distributed study guides to films concurrently with their initial release to promote attendance. Examples of films for which this was done include A Man For All Seasons and The Gospel According to Matthew.

In direct collaboration with NCOMP, the Center began the preparation of the Catholic Film Newsletter with the first issue on December 3, 1964. Printed in New York, the Catholic Film Newsletter (CFN) was written entirely by Henry Herx and his volunteer associates at the Center until February of 1966, when Miss Mary Evans, assistant to Fr. Sullivan, began to make contributions. Consisting of film reviews (along with NCOMP classifications) and brief film education notes, CFN is published by NCOMP 13 times a year. Mr. Herx provides the film education notes and an occasional review; Miss Evans now writes most of the reviews and edits the publication in New York. Samples of CFN are appended to these pages.

The circulation of CFN is not audited. The estimate of the office is that the circulation is 13,000. It is interesting to note that of the 63 consultors who responded to the questionnaire, 35 had no knowledge of its existence, three had only seen one or two issues. Seven consultors were highly enthusiastic about it, citing the importance of educating a school audience for films of quality, and six consultors admitted it might be helpful for students and teachers. Only two consultors felt that CFN should be expanded to replace NCOMP classifications with reviews.

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RECENT CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASS A, SECTION I

(Morally Unobjectionable for General Patronage)

THE BALLAD OF JOSIE—Universal

ENTER LAUGHING—Columbia

FROZEN DEAD—Warner Bros.-Seven Arts

WHAT AM I BID?—Emerson

CLASS A, SECTION III

(Morally Unobjectionable for Adults)

THE LONG RIDE HOME—Columbia

THE THIEF OF PARIS—(Lopert)—United Artists

CLASS A, SECTION IV

(Morally Unobjectionable for Adults, with Reservations)

THE HAWKS AND THE SPARROWS—Brandon

Observation: The allegorical character of the film offers unusual difficulties of interpretation.

CLASS B

(Morally Objectionable in Part for All)

THE QUEENS (Italian)—Columbia

Objection: This film tends to be dehumanizing in its one-sided, negative view of women.

CLASS C (Condemned)

BEACH RED—United Artists

Objection: In attempting to explore the inhumanity of war, this film is self-defeating because its repetitious emphasis upon the realistic details of carnage and its degrading treatment of women are themselves inhuman.

HELL'S ANGELS ON WHEELS—U.S. Films

Objection: Trash is the word for this exploitation of sex and brutality for their own sake. Theatre owners who book this film are patently guilty of complete social irresponsibility to their communities, especially to the young.

The Catholic Film Newsletter alternates with the Classification List at bi-weekly intervals for a total of twenty-six issues per year. Subscription rates for this service are $5.00 (first class mail) or $6.00 (air mail). Bulk subscription rates also available. All inquiries regarding subscriptions should be addressed to the Subscription Manager, National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, 453 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Questions and comments relating to the material found in the Newsletter should be sent to the National Center for Film Study, 1307 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605; phone 663-0080 (area code 312).

Cover photograph of a scene from "THE WHISPERERS" courtesy of Lobert Pictures (United Artists).

CATHOLIC FILM NEWSLETTER

THE WHISPERERS. Movies have rarely attempted to deal with the problems of old age in any serious fashion. Vittorio de Sica's *Umberto D* and last year's *The Shameless Old Lady* are two that succeeded. *The Whisperers* is another to be added to that select company.

Mrs. Ross, a woman of seventy-six, was deserted long ago by her husband and her only son. In her incredibly cluttered flat, she lives alone, talking to herself and to the voices that she imagines are whispering lies about her. She moves in a dream world, which includes an imaginary past and the delusion that she will one day receive a legacy from a rich relative. Her expectation seems to be realized when she accidentally discovers some stolen money hidden away by her son in a vacant room. For her sudden wealth she is drugged, robbed and left in an alleyway overnight. Her recovery from resulting illness is momentarily brightened by the return of her husband, who again disappears at the first opportunity. The film ends about as it began, with Mrs. Ross withdrawing, seeking comfort in the world of her imagination.

The film is completely that of Dame Edith Evans, a remarkable actress whose performance here as Mrs. Ross is a masterpiece of understanding and naturalness. The role is glamorless but filled with the human dignity of an old woman beset by desperate loneliness and physical infirmity. By the tone of her voice or an aimless movement she conveys feelings of helplessness, weariness or despair. Her portrait of old age is convincingly real; full of compassion but without false sentimentality. Her performance richly deserved the Best Actress award it received at the Berlin Film Festival.

She is surrounded by a small but superb cast. Eric Portman is just right as the calculating husband. Avis Bunnage is thoroughly disagreeable as the one who steals from the old lady without a second thought. Gerald Sim is believably sincere as the welfare officer concerned about the plight of Mrs. Ross.

Bryan Forbes directed his script with great care for the accumulation of details that make up Mrs. Ross' daily round: her visits to the Assistance Board and the police station, her warming her feet at the public library, her singing hymns for a meal at the mission. The dramatic incidents may be overdrawn and contrived, the plot at times may wander away from its central character, and the welfare workers are certainly a bit glamorized. But Dame Edith Evans knits it all firmly together by her overwhelming influence even when she is not on the screen. Gerry Turpin's excellent location photography contributes to the authenticity of the role and John Barry's subdued score adds some additional pathos. (The International Catholic Film Office awarded its prize at the 17th Berlin Film Festival to *The Whisperers* as the film "which by its inspiration and quality contributes to the spiritual progress and development of human values.") (A-II)

THE FLIM-FLAM MAN. "You can't cheat an honest man!" was the phrase W. C. Fields immortalized, and Irvin Kerschner uses it as the point of departure for his latest movie, a refresher course on flim-flamming to delight those who like their larceny well-mixed with laughter. George C. Scott is the confidence man of venerable age but failing ability who coaches young Michael Sarrazin in the subtle art of capitalizing on the greed of his fellow man. The film moves swiftly, often displaying slapstick overtones in the best tradition of visual comedy.

Its hilarious chase sequence with cars eluding one another stands on equal footing with the best of the silent masters.

Mordecai Jones (Scott), pitched from a moving boxcar, literally falls into the company of Curley Treadaway (Sarrazin), AWOL and on the run from the Military Police. This chance encounter leads to adventures in cadging, conning and chicanery. While "borrowing" a car, the unlikely pair meet Bonnie Lee (Sue Lyon), who is as taken with Curley as Mordecai is with her red convertible. During their ensuing mad chase, they manage to demolish much of a town, infuriate the outwitted sheriff (Harry Morgan), uncover a still and escape in the moonshiner's truck, which is equipped with a police radio. But their happy condition ends abruptly when well-meaning Bonnie Lee gives away their location to the sheriff. In the concluding mad-cap escape, Curley holds the town at bay with some fancy flim-flamming of his own, while Scott makes off in his usual chaotic fashion.

George C. Scott, who often plays the heavy, here fashions the character of the irascible old codger with shades of Fields, Twain, and many nuances of his own. Scott alternates carefree flamboyance with glimpses of the pathos that is part of a drifter's loneliness. The serio-comic ironies derive mostly from the way in which his Mordecai bilks those whose greed leads them to think that it is they who are taking advantage of him.

Young French Canadian Michael Sarrazin is completely appealing as the farm boy who is full of natural talent in deception but is also innately honest. Long after he decides to quit his life of running, he remains with Mordecai because he can't bear to hurt the loveable old scoundrel. Sarrazin wins audience sympathy in this congenial role, and one looks forward to seeing more of him.

Harry Morgan, the long-suffering sheriff, turns in another excellent performance. Slim Pickens has a good bit as a farmer taken in by one of the oldest con games. The rest of the cast is uniformly capable, each contributing something to the enjoyment of the film. Sue Lyons' romantic part is essentially only a plot device, but she is refreshing as the good influence in Curley's life.

Irvin Kerschner has been fortunate with films made on location; *The Hoodlum Priest* and *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, for instance. This time he is aided by some beautiful scenery, photographed in color by Charles Lang. The film was done in Kentucky, and the contemporary country atmosphere is an essential element. Unlike so many recent films shot on location in this country, this one has a feeling of authentic Americana.

Guy Owen's novel was adapted by William Rose, whose script is equally balanced between humorous action and a portrait of the con artist as an old man. Throwaway lines in the first rate dialogue are as good as many of the main gags in other films. The pace of the action and the timing of the actors keep the film rolling on its way with few detours. Jerry Goldsmith's music also contributes to the zestful progress.

If one were to draw a lesson from *The Flim-Flam Man's* shennanigans, it might be that while cheating greedy people is easy, being a fugitive is a hard way to live. But then, no system of free enterprise is perfect. (A-II)

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT. The basic situation from which this film begins is familiar enough to the devotee of mystery stories. A traveller waits for a connecting train in a small southern town late at night, when suddenly he is picked up as a murder suspect. He turns

BEST OF THE NEW FILMS (cont.)

out to be a homicide detective with the Philadelphia police department, and since he has been mistakenly involved with the murder, he stays on to find the guilty party.

The detective (Sidney Poitier) finds his scientific deductions contradict the assumptions of the red-neck police chief (Rod Steiger). So the mystery plot is only an excuse for the confrontation of these two accomplished actors. Poitier is a well-paid specialist whose pride and need to prove his superiority force him to outdo the bigoted southerners. Steiger is a gum-chewing, hard-headed authoritarian, human enough to come to respect the professional ability of a man whose skin is not white like his own. The two personalities clash heatedly at first, but a certain mutual respect is allowed to develop naturally.

Sterling Silliphant's adaptation of John Ball's mystery story is probably correct in playing down the murder and its solution. Norman Jewison directs his principals and their supporting cast with a shrewd eye for both laughs and a little social comment. Haskell Wexler's color photography makes fine use of the hot Mississippi locale but occasionally gets a little arty, as when his hand-held camera breaks the tempo of a chase scene to photograph falling leaves and a child's doll. The film has a point to make about prejudice, but it will be remembered best for two fine characterizations. (A-III)

FILM EDUCATION COMMENT

Some educators are trying to put school and life together again by looking more and more toward programs in both film and humanities. In their search for successful programs, they can find a great deal of help in a new book by Sister Bede Sullivan, O.S.B., entitled *Movies: Universal Language* (Fides Publishers, Inc. Notre Dame, Ind. $2.45). The book is essentially a teacher's report of her use of film as a humanizing force in a culturally and racially mixed high school in Kansas City.

To Sister Bede movies are not pure and precious things to be stored in museums or screened only by initiated film buffs. Nor are they mere audio-visual tools used to teach more important subjects. Nor are they aesthetic opiate for the masses. Rather, for her movies are a realistic way to humanize the culturally starved products of our educational systems. She does this indirectly by placing film study in the context of literature, composition and language study. Thus film study is not isolated from the rest of the curriculum, nor does it become the "good guy" in an otherwise "bad guy" situation from the student's point of view. Purists will quarrel with her free-wheeling use of film and especially with the way she involves other teachers who know little about film, but no one can seriously argue with her results.

Sister Bede has understood the impact of Marshall McLuhan's "probes" and does more than translate them; she relates his ideas to her teaching situation and follows through with down-to-earth practicality. Like most teachers who take films seriously, she is an iconoclast when it comes to education.

Mass media has changed the function of school today. Schools are no longer places for disseminating information . . . What the schools need to accomplish today is to uncover the structure of knowledge, the patterns of information, and to relate these to the student's needs.

FILM EDUCATION COMMENT (cont.)

Sister Bede realizes her film course is not a panacea for the ills of education. It is an eminently adaptable program and can be an invaluable asset to almost any school. Every student of Sister Bede's Lillis High School gets a cinematic baptism, and a few have the chance to take her course in Related Arts. Using a "film and" approach, she weaves dance, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, literature and cinema into a whole piece. This section of the book should prove especially fascinating to any teacher interested in the humanities programs under current study by organizations such as the National Council of the Teachers of English.

As a near-spontaneous result of the film course, Sister Bede's students produce their own short films. For a film teacher, this is most rewarding. "She [the teacher] sees brilliant youngsters challenged, dull ones interested, discouraged ones revived." Filmmaking becomes more than a valid means of student self-expression; it can be the language by which they bridge the generational gap, the peer gap, and the geo-political gap.

The last fifty pages are devoted to miscellaneous information including lists of important film awards. Anyone writing film notes may find these useful. The only flawed section is the list of film distributors of 16mm films, many of whom are either out of business or have changed address. A lapse in research, it mars an otherwise commendable book.

A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

BAREFOOT IN THE PARK (U.S.). Broad comedy, strong acting and direction make for continuous laughter in this adaptation by Neil Simon of his own popular Broadway hit about a young married couple (Jane Fonda and Robert Redford) whose apartment is five flights up from the street. Mildred Natwick, Charles Boyer, Herbert Edelman and Fritz Feld contribute dandy supporting roles. Surefire lines, funny bits of business and sight gags point to a successful directing debut for Gene Saks, who played the children's TV star in *A Thousand Clowns*. (A-III)

ENTER LAUGHING (U.S.). A cheery, book-to-stage-to-movie autobiography based on comedian Carl Reiner's first break into show biz. Stronger direction might have raised the various styles of humor to a single high level, and it might have overcome the "big TV show" feeling of a few scenes, but overall the Jewish humor consistently tickles. Elaine May's mannerisms and caricatures create a thoroughly unsympathetic but outlandishly laughable neurotic, and Michael J. Pollard adds a fine folksy touch. There is nothing everlasting about the humor, but any audience will thoroughly enjoy their stay and exit laughing. (A-I)

THE BIG CITY (India). An unassuming but dignified story of what happens in the home when a young mother must find work in the city to help support her family. Originally shown at the 1964 New York Film Festival, *The Big City (Mahanagar)* is still the most recent film by Indian director Satyajit Ray (The *Apu* trilogy) to be released in this country. Ray continues to fashion with considerable human warmth the simple situations of ordinary living. While the conclusion doesn't exactly follow and audience involvement wears thin at times, the successful scenes are worth waiting for. (A-II)

A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS (cont.)

THE HAPPIEST MILLIONAIRE (U.S.). A musical biography (adapted from the Broadway stage) of the Biddles and the Dukes, done in a *Mary Poppins* style. The Disney touch is evident in the panoramic vistas, elaborate turn-of-the century sets, Fred MacMurray, and some domesticated alligators. Story interest runs in spurts and starts, perhaps because of its roadshow length. The music and lyrics, with one or two exceptions, are undistinguished and indistinguishable, but on the whole this is one of the stronger attempts by the Disney studios. (A-I)

THE HAWKS AND THE SPARROWS (Italy). A Pasolini parable about the ~~journey of~~ man on the road of life. This simply but strikingly photographed allegory in two acts seems to reject all ideologies — Christian or Communist — in favor of a very earth-bound vision of man himself. Even seasoned moviegoers will find this one a puzzle, a sketchy probe rather than a finished statement. The acting of the late Toto is noteworthy, but his character is short on warmth or that sense of dignity which would qualify him as the spiritual brother of us all, the Everyman he seems designed to represent. (A-IV)

TO SIR WITH LOVE (Britain). Sentimental drama about would-be engineer from British Guiana by way of California who winds up teaching and trying to turn some difficult borderline students in a London Cockney slum school into ladies and gentlemen. Based on true, distinguished diary-novel by E. R. Braithwaite. As "Sir," Sidney Poitier dominates classroom and film itself with his extraordinary presence. Some pat solutions for real problems, and student transformations seem overswift, but fine supporting cast (with Suzy Kendall) show life, love and teen-agers much the same in a British "blackboard jungle." Directed by James Clavell. (A-II)

UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE (U.S.). Realistic drama about problems of educating the underprivileged in an American big city high school; based on the best-selling novel by Bel Kaufman. Dedicated young woman (Sandy Dennis) finds regulations, supply shortages, overcrowding, paper work, disciplinary problems and some misguided colleagues almost more than she can handle, but manages some real teaching in spite of it all. Fine support here by Patrick Bedford, Eileen Heckart, Ruth White and Jean Stapleton on the faculty, and Ellen O'Mara, Jose Rodriguez among the students. Directed by Robert Mulligan. (A-II)

THE SCREEN CREDITS—VIII

The Actor

While the average moviegoer is inclined to give credit for an unusually effective and convincing portrayal to the actor who performs it, movie directors have traditionally downgraded the value of screen acting. They have variously described film actors as living statues, plastic material, puppets, robots, and even cattle (Hitchcock). Such descriptions vividly stress that the nature of film acting is totally distinct from that of performing on the stage.

A stage actor has the opportunity to develop a role during weeks of rehearsals, perfecting each bit until it becomes a coherent whole. He sustains his characterization during a continuous performance reacting to the response of a live audience. But the film actor performs his role in bits and pieces, with long intervals of waiting for the positioning of the necessary technical equipment. Often he must repeat the same action and dialogue for a number of takes and his only audience is a professional crew more attentive to their duties than to his performance.

Moreover, the nature of the camera is such that it demands underplaying rather than the projection which a stage actor must employ to reach his audience. The eye of the camera is so literal that it will record an actor impersonating a role just as easily as it will the actions of a person being himself. It has often been said that screen actors should not try to "act" a part but to become the role they are interpreting. In other words, naturalness is better than expressiveness in films. On the stage, a performance must be exaggerated and made larger than life; on film, the actor has to appear above all to be a real person who is saying something or doing some action spontaneously and for the first time.

The actor is only one of the many elements which the director uses to communicate with his audience. Very often it is the placement of the camera, the lighting, or the music which "acts" more expressively than the person being photographed. The director selects various parts of an action and combines them into a dynamic unity of greater ideological and emotional depth than the actor is able. Proper cinematic technique, especially editing, can transform an actor's mediocre performance into a great one.

The differences between stage and film acting have led some theorists to conclude that actual, non-professional people rather than trained actors are better for the screen. The silent films in Russia, for example, used real people who fulfilled the sole requirement of looking the type needed for a particular role. The post-war neorealist movement in Italy also used non-professionals very successfully. Using real people, even in documentaries, is extremely difficult and calls for a director talented in maintaining the naturalness and spontaneity of his non-actors when they are faced by cameras and equipment. Nothing is more false than a non-actor self-consciously trying to be himself in front of a camera.

The successful professional actor develops into a "movie star." Hollywood early learned the value of the star system which it consciously built through its great years of entertainment films. The chief merit of a star was that he guaranteed the financial success of any film in which he appeared. The plot became secondary to the vicarious pleasure enjoyed by millions of fans through their identification with a favorite star. Because of his personality and outward appearance the star embodied a particular type of character; his appeal was strong enough to last over the years in the imagination of the audience. Unfortunately, the cult appeal of the star was independent of the range or quality of his acting. It was based solely upon his ability to manifest a vital screen presence.

With the decline of the star system, the movies have come to rely more than ever before upon the actor who has succeeded in other media. A number of fine stage actors such as Charles Laughton, Michael Redgrave, and Laurence Olivier have had distinguished film careers. Such actors have not been limited to portraying one particular type of character but have interpreted a wide variety of roles. Actors who can be convincing in complex parts are particularly necessary in the contemporary cinema which is more concerned with phychological truth than with narrative action. Although the actor will never dominate the art of the film, he has become increasingly important as one of its creative elements.

NOTES FOR FEATURE FILMS

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IKIRU (Brandon)
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THE INFORMER (Films, Inc.)
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STORM OVER ASIA (Mus. Mod. Art) (silent)
THE SUITOR (Brandon)
SUNDAYS AND CYBELLE (Royal 16 International)
SUNRISE (Mus. Mod. Art) (silent)
THE SWINDLE (Audio)
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TIME GENTLEMEN, PLEASE (Brandon)
TO BE OR NOT TO BE (Institutional 16)
TOUCH OF EVIL (United World)
THE TRIAL (Brandon)
THE TRIAL OF JOAN OF ARC (Contemporary)
TRUE HEART SUSIE (Mus. Mod. Art) (silent)
TWELFTH NIGHT (Brandon)

UMBERTO D (Audio)
VIRIDIANA (Audio)
VIRGIN SPRING (Janus)
THE VIRGINIAN (Mus. Mod. Art)

WARNING SHADOWS (Mus. Mod. Art)
WESTFRONT 1918 (Mus. Mod. Art)
THE WHITE REINDEER (Audio)
THE WHITE SHEIK (Contemporary)
WILD STRAWBERRIES (Janus)
WINTER LIGHT (Janus)
WOMAN IN THE DUNES (Contemporary)
WORLD WITHOUT SUN (Audio) (Swank)

ZAZIE (Audio)
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NOTES FOR SHORT FILMS

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AUTOMANIA 2000 (Contemporary)

THE BALLOONATIC (EmGee)
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CITY OF GOLD (Contemporary)
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DAY AFTER DAY (Contemporary)
DONNA AND GAIL (Contemporary)
DOUBLE WHOOPEE (Audio)
DREAM OF WILD HORSES (Contemporary)
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ENTR'ACTE (Mus. Mod. Art)
EPHESUS (Audio)
AN EVENING WITH MR. LAUREL AND MR. HARDY (Audio)

A GIRL IN THE MIST (Brandon)
GOODNIGHT, SOCRATES (Contemporary)
GRANTON TRAWLER (Contemporary)
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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY (Contemporary) (Swank) (Twyman) (TFC)

I WAS A NINETY POUND WEAKLING (Contemporary)
INTERREGNUM (Contemporary)

THE KNOCKOUT (Audio)

LES MISTONS (Janus)
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NEIGHBORS (Contemporary) (EmGee)
NEW YORK HAT (Audio) (EmGee)
NIGHT AND FOG (Contemporary)

OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE (Contemporary)
ORANGE AND BLUE (Contemporary)
OVERTURE (Contemporary)

PARABLE (Twyman) (Contemporary)
PHOEBE (Contemporary)
POPE PAUL AT THE U.N. (Contemporary)
THE PUSHER (Brandon)

ROMEO (Brandon)
THE RUNNER (Contemporary)

SEAWARDS, THE GREAT SHIP (Contemporary)
THE SKELETON DANCE (Audio)
SKY (Contemporary)
THE SMILE (Contemporary)
THE STRING BEAN (Contemporary)

THE TENDER GAME (Contemporary)
THAT'S ME (Contemporary)
TIME IS (Contemporary)
A TIME OUT OF WAR (Contemporary)
TRIP TO THE MOON (Audio) (EmGee)
21-87 (Contemporary)
TWO MEN AND A WARDROBE (Contemporary)

A UNICORN IN THE GARDEN (Contemporary) (Swank) (Twy) (TFC)

VERY NICE, VERY NICE (Contemporary)
VIVRE (LIVING) (Contemporary)

WHITE MANE (Contemporary)

ZERO DE CONDUITE (Brandon)

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH COVERING LETTER SENT TO NCOMP CONSULTORS

Dear Consultor:

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire that we earnestly request you to fill out as fully as possible and return to this office at your earliest convenience.

We realize the burden it places on your time and energy, but hope that you will be generous in this regard as you have been in helping us in the past. The purpose of the questionnaire is to get an honest sample of the "public opinion" of our many consultors as part of a study being made of this office that will help us to know ourselves better and thus increase our efficiency.

Your cooperation and patience is deeply appreciated and we beg a continued remembrance in your prayers for the work of the office and its success.

In Our Lord,

(Signed) Patrick J. Sullivan, S.J.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer all the questions, even if your answer is "I don't know," or "I do not choose to answer." Please answer each question as fully as you desire. If space is lacking on the form, use a separate sheet of paper of your own. If there is some other information, not asked for, that you wish to communicate, please do so. We are most grateful for your cooperation.

1. The film critics whose judgments I most respect are:

2. The most helpful book(s) I've read on film are:

3. The film director(s) whose work I respect most are:

4. Generally speaking, the best two movies I have seen in the past four years are:

5. Generally speaking, the poorest two movies I have seen in the past four years are:

6. I believe that my ratings receive consideration from the NCOMP officials in making their decision--yes or no?

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

7. The most frequent moral offense of films is

8. The most serious moral offense of films is (Give reasons)

QUESTIONNAIRE 3

9. The most important Church statement, in my opinion, on the film is (Give title of document or idea):

10. Films can accomplish the following moral goods:

11. As a matter of fact, films have achieved the following moral goods:

QUESTIONNAIRE 4

12. Generally speaking, the following are the criteria or norms I use in judging a film for classification (The questions I ask myself about the film):

QUESTIONNAIRE 5

13. I approve/disapprove of the current NCOMP classification system because:

14. My experience with the Catholic Film Newsletter and any other works of the National Center of Film Study in Chicago has given me the following opinion of its value:

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